Dynamics of Repeated Interviews with Children

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Abstract

Concerns regarding repeat interviews with child witnesses include greater use of suggestive questions in later interviews due to bias, and that children may appear inconsistent and, therefore, be judged as less reliable in court. UK transcripts of first and second interviews with 21 child victims/witnesses (conducted by qualified interviewers) were coded for question types and child responses. Interviewers were consistent in their proportional use of question types across interviews. Furthermore, children were as informative in second interviews as in first, mostly providing new details consistent with their prior recall. Despite the apparent lack of training in conducting repeated interviews, no negative effects were found; second interviews appeared to be conducted as well as initial interviews and they provided new details without many contradictions. It is suggested that when a child's testimony is paramount for an investigation, a well-conducted supplementary interview may be an effective way of gaining further investigative leads.

Keywords: repeated interviews; child victims; investigative interviewing; child abuse.

Dynamics of Repeated Interviews with Children

Repeat interviewing refers to the practice of interviewing a single victim or witness (henceforth referred to as witness) more than once about the same event. Re-interviewing children has heretofore been discouraged (Leichtman & Ceci, 1995; Ministry of Justice, 2011; Scottish Executive, 2011), despite the evident opportunity to possibly obtain further valid information from a witness. There are a number of reasons why repeat interviews are discouraged, including the risk that they could increase confirmation bias in interviewers' questioning techniques (Scottish Executive, 2011), and afford interviewees further opportunities to provide inconsistent information; both of which can have negative effects on the accuracy of the testimony provided and the perception of said testimony in court (Lamb, Orbach, Hershkowitz, Horowitz, & Abbott, 2007; Leippe, Manion, & Romanczyk, 1992; Quas, Thompson, & Clarke-Stewart, 2005; Sternberg et al., 1996). It has been argued, however, that the negative outcomes of repeat interviews are largely caused by the use of inappropriate techniques (such as suggestive questions; Faller, Cordisco-Steele, & Nelson-Gardell, 2010) and that, if carried out correctly, repeat interviews could be a rich source of further accurate information of interest to the investigation (for a review, see La Rooy, Lamb, & Pipe, 2009).

Despite the discouragement of repeat interviews, they do occur in the UK and many other countries. Indeed, UK interviewing guidelines (Ministry of Justice, 2011; Scottish Executive, 2011) outline certain circumstances in which second interviews could be recommended, which are when:

- Further time is needed to discuss allegations disclosed in the first interview,
- New information is uncovered during the investigation that needs to be discussed with the child,
- The accused mentions events that were not discussed in the first interview,

- The child becomes extremely distressed when first interviewed,
- Multiple meetings are necessary to build sufficient rapport with the child, or for the interviewer to be trusted by the child,
- The child did not provide information in the first interview and subsequently becomes willing to talk,
- During the first interview it becomes clear the child needs additional support from a specialist source in order to give her/his account.

In Plotnikoff and Woolfson's (2001) study including a pilot group of 11 Scottish cases, 14 of the 25 child witnesses were interviewed more than once by the police, although it was not always clear why. However, interviewers are given very little specific guidance on how to conduct second interviews; merely informed to conduct them using the guidance given for first interviews (Ministry of Justice, 2011; Scottish Executive, 2011). The present study, therefore, uses a sample of UK interviews to evaluate the quality of repeat interviews, the apparent reasons for conducting them, and the benefits and disadvantages of repeat interviews in terms of the quality and investigative value of the resulting testimony.

One advantage of conducting a second or subsequent interview with a child witness is the possibility of obtaining new, investigation-relevant information. Studies using adult samples have found effective ways of gaining extra information from a witness during an initial interview (for example, by asking the witness to recall the event again but from another perspective, Anderson & Pichert, 1978). However, developmental issues, such as children being more easily tired or not being able to understand more complicated instructions, can make these less practical. A repeat interview, using standard interviewing techniques, however, has been found to be effective in obtaining further information from children; children regularly reveal further information about an event in a second interview that they did not reveal in their first interview, this aspect of memory being called reminiscence, which

has been found to occur in both experimental (Fivush, McDermott Sales, Goldberg, Bahrick, & Parker, 2004; La Rooy, Pipe, & Murray, 2005; 2007) and field studies (Hershkowitz & Terner, 2007; Cederborg, La Rooy, & Lamb, 2008; Katz & Hershkowitz, 2013). Reminiscence can involve completely new information, such as recalling a further incident of abuse, or elaborations on previous ones, such as adding that the perpetrator's hair was long, having only previously mentioned it was brown. The available literature also shows that the majority of this new information is accurate. La Rooy, et al. (2007) found that new information in second and third interviews was 58% accurate and the total information provided in second and third interviews was at least 76% accurate on average, in comparison to 94% accuracy in initial interviews. Reminiscence accuracy has been found to be even higher in other studies (for example, 87% accurate in Gilbert and Fisher, 2006). This new, mainly accurate, information may include crucial investigation-relevant information.

However, such benefits of repeat interviewing are not without drawbacks. Perceived inconsistencies can negatively affect mock-jurors' perceptions of children's believability (Leippe, et al., 1992; Quas, et al., 2005), but inconsistency can take several different forms (Krix, Sauerland, Lorei, & Rispens, 2015). Contradictions are a form of inconsistency that indicate that some of the child's testimony is inaccurate. When a child directly contradicts her/himself, one of the pieces of information provided must be inaccurate; for example, if a child states that the perpetrator had long hair in one interview, and that they were bald in another. This does not, on the other hand, necessarily mean the entire account is inaccurate (Fisher et al., 2009).

Another form of perceived inconsistency can be reminiscence (La Rooy, Katz, Malloy, & Lamb, 2010). Despite the literature that has found children's reminiscence to be largely accurate (Gilbert & Fisher, 2006; La Rooy et al., 2007), children's reminiscence may still negatively affect jurors' opinions of the child's testimony. Fisher, Brewer, and Mitchell

(2009) found that this form of inconsistency was not a good indicator of unreliable testimony, and that instead, the quality of the interview (e.g., types of questions asked) gave a better indication of the accuracy of the child's responses.

In the present sample, it is unknown whether the children's accounts are accurate or not. Therefore, instead of accuracy, the quality of the interviews, as indicated by the types of questions asked, will be analysed, along with the proportion of contradictory responses made in the children's second interviews. Very few previous studies using real forensic interviews of children have measured the proportion of contradictions provided in repeat interviews (Cederborg et al.'s [2008] study being the only one to the authors' knowledge), but when analysed, the proportion of contradictions have been low (2%). The present study adds to the very limited literature on this topic.

A second concern about repeat interviewing is that interviewers may be at a higher risk of various biases in later interviews. If interviewers hold strong beliefs about how an event occurred, they may ask questions that mould the testimony to fit these beliefs (White, Leichtman, & Ceci, 1997). For example, interviewers may use more suggestive questions (questions that imply a correct answer or introduce new information into the interview that the interviewee has not previously mentioned) in second and subsequent interviews as their knowledge of the event or time pressures upon them increase. Children's responses to suggestive questions are often inaccurate (Lamb, Malloy, & La Rooy, 2011). Although an increased reliance on suggestive questions is not the only form of confirmation bias that can affect an investigation (for example, perception of evidence quality can vary; Ask, Rebelius & Granhag, 2008), it could be argued that suggestive questioning is the worst form due to its possible effects on the accuracy of children's testimony.

The few studies that have examined interviewers' question styles across repeat interviews found inconsistent results (Cederborg et al., 2008; Hershkowitz & Terner, 2007;

Katz & Hershkowitz, 2013; Patterson & Pipe, 2009; Santtila, Korkman, & Sandnabba, 2004). Second interviews conducted using the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development's interviewing protocol (henceforth NICHD, for further information, see Lamb, La Rooy, Malloy, & Katz, 2011), are more likely to avoid increased reliance on suggestive questions in second interviews (Hershkowitz & Terner, 2007; Katz & Hershkowitz, 2013). However, less structured interviewing guidelines (similar to the UK guidelines, Ministry of Justice, 2011; Scottish Executive, 2011) may have a greater risk of poorer interviewing styles (i.e., using fewer open questions and more suggestive ones) in second interviews (Cederborg, et al., 2008; Patterson & Pipe, 2009; Santtila, et al., 2004). Studies that have examined the consistency of interviewers' question type usage and interviewing behaviours within interviews, and across different interviewing contexts (i.e., mock-child, mock-adult and field interviews) have found some consistency in the use of open-ended and leading questions, but also some variation related to context and the event the child is recalling (Gilstrap, 2004; Powell, Cavezza, Hughes-Scholes, & Stoove, 2010). Thus, the present study aims to determine whether UK interviewers are consistent in their interviewing or follow this same pattern of incremental suggestive questioning in repeat interviews, and therefore elicit less reliable testimony from children.

The Present Study

The aims of the present study are to determine (a) the reasons second interviews are conducted with child victims/witnesses in the UK, (b) whether second interviews differ from first interviews in regard to interviewer question types (and consequently interview quality) and interviewee informativeness (both number of details and type of details), and (c) how consistent or contradictory children are in their recall in second interviews.

It is particularly challenging to make predictions regarding interviewer and interviewee behaviours across repeat interviews as there are so very few studies that have previously examined this. However, it is expected that with the progression of the investigation and the interviewers' increased knowledge (and possibly biases) about the event(s), that when re-interviewing children, interviewers may use fewer open questions and introduce more new information into the interview by asking more closed, forced choice or leading questions (as found in Santtila et al., 2004). Additionally, based on the experimental literature, it is predicted that children will provide new information in second interviews.

Method

Sample

A convenience sample was used. Transcripts from cases that had gone to trial were provided by lawyers to one of the authors for quality assessment through that author's work as an expert witness. These were examined to identify cases in which a child victim or witness had been interviewed more than once by the police or trained social workers. This revealed 14 cases that involved repeated interviewing of 21 children, who were interviewed an average of 2.52 times (range 2 to 5). In many of the interviews, a police officer asked all of the questions (11 or 52.4% of first interviews and 14 or 66.7% of second), with the rest being jointly conducted with a social worker (9.5% of all first and second interviews) or an additional police officer (4.8%), or by a social worker alone (26.2%). These interviews were conducted between 2003 and 2013.

Video recording of interviews only became mandatory in the jurisdictions from which the interviews come in 2011 (Nicol, La Rooy, & Houston, 2015), thus, the quality of the transcripts varied from verbatim transcriptions of video-recordings to scribed transcripts (notes written during the interview by a second interviewer who attempted to include word-

for-word interviewer and interviewee utterances). In order for scribed transcripts to be as accurate as possible, interviewers prior to 2011 were trained to conduct their interviews at a slow pace. Of the present sample, 57.1% were conducted prior to 2011. To explore whether the scribed interviews conducted prior to 2011 documented fewer details provided by the child than interviews transcribed from videos, (2011 and later), independent samples t-tests were conducted. These indicated there was no significant difference between the number of child-provided details included in first interviews conducted before (M = 148.33, SE = 27.41) and after 2011 (M = 159.67, SE = 45.75, $t(19) = -.224$, $p = .825$). This was also true for second interviews conducted before (M = 108.25, SE = 66.91) and after 2011 (M = 145.22, SE = 89.53, $t(19) = -1.085$, $p = .291$).

The children interviewed were (alleged) victims from three to 14 years old (M = 7.5, SD = 3.0), 52.4% of whom were male. The majority were interviewed regarding allegations of child sexual abuse (61.9%), with some interviewed regarding physical abuse (19%), some both (4.8%), and some about sexual abuse plus domestic violence (14.3%). The 'victim-perpetrator' relationship was in the majority parental (61.9%) or other familial (28.6%), with 9.5% extra-familial.

This study will focus on the first and second interviews of these children[1].

Coding

Prior to coding, the interview transcripts were anonymised by the lead researcher, removing references to names, places, dates, and any particularly distinguishing aspects of the crime. All utterances in the interview transcript were coded. Each change in speaker

[1] Seven children were interviewed more than twice. Their third interviews were analysed but the sample size was too small for strong conclusions (see results section). Fourth and fifth interviews were not analysed due to there being such a low sample size. Only three children experienced a fourth interview and one a fifth.

(interviewee to interviewer and vice versa) signified a new utterance. Interviewer utterances were coded for question type.

Interviewer Question Types

Every utterance that asked the child for information was coded for its question type. The coding for question types was based on Lamb, et al.'s (2007) study, with the addition of 'unknown' and 'multiple' categories as such utterances were frequently found in the transcripts. The question types were as follows:

1. *invitations:* This category consisted of open questions and prompters; both of which encourage free recall. An example of an open question is 'Tell me everything that happened' whereas a prompter involved a minimal encourager, such as 'Uhuh' or echoing the child's words.
2. *directives:* The interviewer encouraged free recall on a cued topic around a subject that the child had previously mentioned. For example, wh- questions such as 'Where did that happen?' fall into this category.
3. *option-posing:* This category included both yes/no questions (which demanded a "yes" or "no" answer) and forced choice questions, which encourage children to give one of a number of pre-specified answers. It also included questions starting with 'Can you tell me...' as these sorts of questions can appear to include two questions in one (i.e., 'Can you' and 'Tell me') and as such are ambiguous and thought to be difficult for younger children to understand (Hardy & Van Leeuwen, 2004),
4. *multiple:* The interviewer asked more than one question in one utterance. This category also included occasions when the interviewer summarised what the child had said previously, thus expecting clarification of multiple details in response to one question (e.g., 'The man was wearing a red hat and walked down the street. Is that right?'),

5. *suggestive:* The question introduces information the child has not mentioned previously in any interview or implies a desired response. The question may also include other suggestive techniques, such as mentioning what the interviewer has heard from other sources. For example, 'Your mum told me your brother hurt you, what do you remember about that?',
6. *unknown:* The question was not clearly transcribed, and parts of the question were missing, or the question was not finished, either because the child interrupted or the adult changed the question.

If an utterance fell under more than one coding category (for example, some utterances could be coded as both multiple and suggestive when the interviewer asked more than one question and one or more of these questions were suggestive), the higher numbered category was used (e.g. 5 is greater than 4, and so the example would be coded as suggestive). This is because the higher numbered question types could cause greater inaccuracies in a child's recall (Lamb et al., 2007) and so cause more damage to the quality of the information given during the child's interview (apart from the 'unknown' category in which it was impossible to tell what the interviewer was going to ask).

Interviewee Utterances

Child utterances were coded for the number of details provided, the type of the information, and its likely investigation-relevance. When the child repeated information within the same interview (i.e., the second time he/she stated a detail) or provided information that was not related to the event(s) being discussed, these details were coded as 'non-substantive', and no further coding of such utterances occurred. In second (and third) interviews, each child utterance was also coded for the novelty and consistency (i.e., consistent with or contradicting prior interview recall) of the information provided.

Number of Details

The number of details that the children provided was determined partly by the number of clauses in each utterance. A clause (as in Gross and Hayne, 1999) was a simple statement, with every additional detail scored separately. If the interviewer had asked the child 'Where is your bedroom?' and the child had responded 'Upstairs', this would also count as one detail. If the interviewer asked an option-posing question, such as 'Is your bedroom upstairs or downstairs?', the child's answer of 'Upstairs' would still count as one detail. Additionally, if the child added information, such as 'My bedroom is upstairs with Mummy's', this would count as two details. Further details within the clause were also coded (for example, 'he was wearing a blue shirt' would count as two details, with one for the clause, and one for blue). When children listed people or objects each additional item in the list counted as an extra detail.

Type of Details

The types of details provided by the child were coded for each utterance. If the child spoke about multiple types within one utterance, they were coded separately. The types, as in Phillips, Oxburgh, Gavin, and Myklebust (2012), were (a) *people:* details relating to persons involved in the event/s, (b) *actions:* details explaining what happened during the event/s and any other relevant time points, (c) *locations:* details of places involved in the event/s, as well as descriptions of the places, (d) *items:* any details of objects or items involved in the event/s, such as descriptions of clothing, and (e) *temporal:* details given regarding the timing of the event/s.

Investigation-Relevance

Each child utterance was also coded for likely investigation-relevance. Defining high- and low-investigation-relevance can be particularly subjective and because both coders were not professional investigators, the definition of high investigation-relevance was made relatively narrow and precise. Details were coded as of *high investigation-relevance* if the child was directly discussing something illegal. For example, all discussion of an adult sexually touching her/him would have been coded as of high investigation-relevance. Denials of illegal events were also included in this category. Alternatively, details were coded as of *low investigation-relevance* if the child was discussing the alleged crime or surrounding events, but not specifically an illegal act. For example, discussion of what happened after the illegal act would be coded as of low investigation-relevance. If children referred to some details of high investigation-relevance and some of low investigation-relevance within one utterance, the details were coded separately.

Consistency and Novelty in Second Interviews

All child utterances in second interviews were coded for whether the child had mentioned the details in the initial interview. They were also coded for whether the new details fitted with their previous testimony, or whether he/she directly contradicted something said in the first interview. The codes were as follows:

- *repeated:* the child had mentioned the detail in the initial interview,
- *new consistent:* the detail had not been mentioned in the first interview, and it did not directly contradict the information previously given by the child. Traditionally, any new information would be categorised as inconsistent as it involves different information from that given in the first interview (i.e. none). However, in the present

study, consistency relates to whether the information fits with the child's previous story or contradicts it,

- *new contradictory:* the detail had not been mentioned in interview one, and it directly contradicted some of the testimony given in that first interview. For example, if in interview one the child had denied ever going to the suspect's house, but described going to the suspect's house in interview two, this and any further details regarding their visit to the suspect's house would be coded as new and contradictory.

Inter-rater Reliability

A second rater coded 19% of the children's interviews (i.e., the interviews of four children). This sub-sample was randomly determined. Agreement for coding of all five aspects of the interviewer and interviewee utterances ranged from 97.2% to 100%, with an average of 99.1% agreement.

Additional Information

Additional information was gathered about each child and their interview. The child's age and gender were determined. Regarding the interview, information was obtained about the number of people present and their professions, whether the interviewers were the same or different people in subsequent interviews, the delay in days between interview one and two, and the reason for the second interviews being conducted. The majority of this information was found on a non-anonymised cover page of the interview transcripts.

Details regarding the reasons for the second interviews were gleaned from the interview transcript itself. The reasons were coded as follows:

- *additional evidence:* the interviewer mentioned in the second interview further evidence from another source that she/he wanted to discuss with the child,

- *child asked to stop first interview:* in some interviews the child was clearly distressed and agreed to come back another day to continue the conversation,
- *conflicting evidence:* the interviewer mentioned in the second interview evidence from another source that differed from what the child had said in the first interview,
- *further child disclosure:* the interviewee disclosed further information, after her/his first interview, to someone who then informed the investigators and this was mentioned by the interviewer or interviewee in the subsequent interview,
- *no disclosure in first interview:* the child had not disclosed any crime in the first interview and no other reason was given for the follow-up one,
- *not obvious:* it was not clear from either the interviewer or the interviewee's comments why another interview was being carried out, and the interviewee had disclosed information in the prior interview (i.e., it could not be categorised as 'no disclosure in first interview').

Results

Interview Details

Twenty one children from the sample were interviewed twice. The total number of child plus interviewer utterances combined were compared. According to paired samples t-tests, the apparent increase in number of utterances in the substantive phases across interviews was not significant, with interview one averaging 210.0 utterances (*SE* = 34.09), and interview two 246.0 utterances (*SE* = 35.58, $t(20) = -.687$, $p = .396$). On average, the second interviews occurred 45 days after the first (with a range of 0 to 368 days later).

First disclosure or partial disclosure (e.g., the child discussed the event but did not clarify what happened) occurred in 66.7% of first interviews, and 19.0% of second

interviews. Three children never disclosed any offence being committed against them. The majority of second interviews were conducted by the same lead interviewer (60.0%).

Reasons for Second Interviews

The most frequent reason for second interviews to be conducted was because the child disclosed no relevant information or a very limited amount of information in the first interview (8 interviews; 38.1%). In four other second interviews the child appeared to have made further disclosures about the event(s) to someone who informed the investigators (19.0%). In three interviews the child had asked to stop the first interview but had agreed to come back for a second interview (14.3%). In a further three interviews there was no obvious reason for the second interview (14.3%). The other three interviews were conducted due to additional evidence, for one of which the evidence opposed the child's prior interview account (4.8%).

Interviewers' Behaviours in Repeat Interviews

Question types. On average, the majority of questions asked in first and second interviews were option-posing, followed by directive (see Table One). None of the interviewers asked the child to remember the event from another person's perspective or in reverse time order. Percentages of each question type were compared for interviews one and two using paired-samples t-tests. No significant differences were found (*p*s > .085).

[Table 1 placed here]

Children's Responses in Repeat Interviews

Number of details. The number of investigation-relevant details provided by children in interviews one (M = 131.5, SE = 25.2) and two (M = 100.5, SE = 14.5) did not significantly differ, $t(20) = 1.32$, $p = .202$.

Type of details. The majority of details recalled in both interviews were about actions (see Table One). The percentages of details recalled regarding people, locations, temporal information, and items were, on average, relatively low. Paired samples t-tests showed only one statistically significant change in the percentages of details provided of each type in interviews one and two. Namely, children provided a significantly greater percentage of details for 'items' in interview two (M = 2.9%, SE = 0.75) than in interview one (M = 1.1%, SE = 0.43, $t(20) = -2.19$, $p = .040$, $r = .44$), though the percentages were very small.

Investigation-relevance. Children provided somewhat similar percentages of high investigation-relevance details (of all the investigation-relevant information provided) in interview one (M = 16.8%, SE = 3.51) and two (M = 20.8%, SE = 4.12). The apparent increase was not significant according to a paired samples t-test, $t(20) = -.672$, $p = .510$. The average number of high investigation-relevant details given in interviews one (M = 24.9 details, SE = 7.61) and two (M = 24.1 details, SE = 6.80) also did not differ significantly, $t(20) = .083$, $p = .935$.

Novelty and Consistency in Interview Two

Consistent. In the second interviews, the majority of details recalled were new and consistent with prior recall in interview one (M = 82.7%, or 80.9 details). Of the new and

consistent information provided in interview two, 19.3% of it was of high investigation-relevance (or, on average, 18.2 details, see Figure One).

[Figure 1 placed here]

Contradictory. Very few 'new and contradictory' details were recalled in interview two (*M* = 11.3% or 14.6 details). When the relatively few 'new and contradictory' details were provided in second interviews (n = 14), 25.6% was of high investigation-relevance (or, on average, 8.0 details, see Figure One).

Repeated. In their second interviews, children did not very often repeat details mentioned in interview one (*M* = 5.9% or 5.1 details). Very few high investigation-relevant details were repeated (see Figure One).

Nature of contradictory details. 'New and contradictory' information was provided in 14 of the 21 second interviews. For six of these interviews, the information was of low investigation-relevance. For the majority of these, the information consisted of a slight change in story, such as contradictory temporal information, or information about who lives where. In the remaining eight interviews, some new contradictory information was of high investigation-relevance. In five of these interviews, the child had denied something happened in the first interview but in interview two had gone on to explain in detail the action that was originally denied. In two further cases the contradictions seemed to relate to the child's understanding of the word 'touch' (a word that has been found to be difficult for children to understand; Quas & Schaaf, 2002, but see Teoh, Pipe, Johnson, & Lamb, 2014). In the

remaining interview, the child had given details in interview one that she/he subsequently changed.

Contradictory details were given in two interviews in response to leading questions from the interviewer that included inaccurate information about what the child had said in the previous interview.

Third Interviews

Although the sample size (n = 7) of third interviews was too small for any findings to be reliable, when paired samples t-tests were conducted between interview three and interviews one and two, no statistically significant differences were found for any of the above measures, other than the percentage of details about items reported.[2]

Discussion

In summary, the results of this study demonstrate that the reasons for second interviews being conducted appear to be in line with UK guidance (Ministry of Justice, 2011; Scottish Executive, 2011). For the most part this was due to children not having disclosed any or enough relevant information in their prior interviews. Additionally, contrary to our predictions, interviewers were found to be highly consistent in their behaviours in first and second interviews. Instead of becoming more reliant on closed question types (e.g., suggestive and yes/no questions), interviewers asked statistically similar percentages of question types in second interviews as in the first. However, although interviewers were consistent, the quality of their interviews was not high; relying mostly on option-posing and suggestive questions in interviews, against the best practice guidelines (Ministry of Justice, 2011; Scottish Executive, 2011) but in line with other studies of interviewer questioning (see

[2] For further details on the analysis of the third interviews, please contact the first author.

below). Children were highly consistent in their responses; providing similar percentages of details (both in terms of topics and investigation-relevance) and numbers of details across interviews. The majority of the information the children provided in second interviews was new and consistent with their prior testimony.

Reasons for Repeat Interviews

The two most frequent reasons for conducting second interviews were (1) because the child had not disclosed key information in their first interview, and (2) because the child had made further disclosures to others which the investigators were then alerted to. The UK guidelines (Ministry of Justice, 2011; Scottish Executive, 2011) state this first reason is appropriate for conducting another interview if the child subsequently becomes willing to disclose. However, three children never disclosed, suggesting they had not become willing to. The second reason could be interpreted as new information uncovered during the investigation that needs discussion with the child; another appropriate reason for conducting a subsequent interview according to UK guidelines (Ministry of Justice, 2011; Scottish Executive, 2011). The current study also suggests that reminiscence (discussed below) occurred with some frequency and that interviewers may be aware of the possible benefits of conducting second interviews to obtain additional information. UK interviewers, therefore, do generally seem to follow the guidelines regarding reasons for conducting second interviews with child witnesses/victims.

Interviewers' Utterances

Interviewer question types were found to be consistent across first and second interviews. The finding of interviewer consistency in the percentages of question types they use across interviews is encouraging in terms of interviewing practice. As the investigation

develops, the risk of the interviewer introducing their own biases (confirmation bias) and information they have obtained from sources other than the interviewee can become higher (Scottish Executive, 2011; Smith & Milne, 2011). This has been found in previous studies where interviewers' use of suggestive or leading questions has increased with the number of interviews the child has experienced (Cederborg et al., 2008; Patterson & Pipe, 2009; Santtila et al., 2004). Such an effect may have been masked, however, because some of the subsequent interviews were conducted by new interviewers.

Although interviewing styles were consistent, the interviews were not ideal. In comparison to previous research that has examined investigative interviewers' use of each question type in England, Wales, and Scotland, the present study's interviews were rather poor (Lamb et al., 2009; La Rooy, Earhart, & Nicol, 2013; see Table Two). As found elsewhere (for example in Australia; Powell et al., 2010), interviewers used only a small percentage of invitations (or open questions) and had a very high reliance on option-posing and suggestive questions. Thus, in the current sample, despite there being no decrease in quality from first to second interviews, there was significant room for improvement in interviewing practices.

[Table 2 placed here]

The quality of the interviews is important for determining the likely accuracy of the child's responses in these interviews. The style of interviewing found in the current sample (i.e., relying on suggestive and option-posing questions and using few open questions) encourages the use of 'recognition memory', rather than 'free-recall'. Recalling information via 'recognition memory' elicits less accurate information (Orbach, & Pipe, 2011), and less information in total (Lamb et al., 2007; Sternberg et al., 1996) than that recalled via 'free-

recall'. Thus, the information obtained in the current sample of first and second interviews could be less reliable/complete than information obtained via best practice interviews.

In regards to poor practice in the current sample, it is important to note a particularly troublesome finding regarding suggestive questions. More than once in the transcripts, suggestive questions were found that included inaccurate information regarding what the child had said in prior interviews. For example, the interviewer in the second interview would ask "You said you went to the park with him last time we spoke, tell me all about that" when the child, according to the prior transcript, had not said they had gone to the park, but that they had gone to the library. This form of questioning has also been noted by prosecutors as a source of inconsistencies in child testimony (Burrows & Powell, 2014) and it can lead to children not correcting the interviewer (Hunt & Borgida, 2001). Thus, interviewers can continue to believe an inaccurate detail and include this in their investigative decision-making. In the present study, for example, children in two interviews provided 'new and contradictory' information in response to this type of question as their testimony changed in response to the inaccurate detail provided by the interviewer. Thus, interviewers should be at their most diligent in not introducing contradictions into the interviewing process themselves. With more thorough planning, the contradictions created by the interviewer misremembering could be avoided.

Interviewee Responses

Interviewees provided on average the same number of pieces of information in their first and second interviews. They also provided the same percentage of each type of information in these interviews, except that there were slightly more 'item' details recalled in interview two than interview one. This could reflect children recalling more detailed specific events in the second interview, having relied on a more general description in the first. This

is consistent with Santtila et al.'s (2004) study in which they found children gave more descriptions in second and subsequent interviews than in first interviews. However, in the present study, this was quite a small effect.

Importantly, the information provided by children in the second interviews was, in the majority, new. This supports the prediction that children would reminisce. The reason for this may have been genuine reminiscence (i.e., the information was not remembered in the first interview, but recalled at a later attempt), or the children's willingness to disclose may have increased (possibly due to a greater understanding of the interview process or rapport with the interviewer). Irrespective of the cause, these children appear by no means to have exhausted their recall in a single interview; a finding supported by the experimental literature (for a review, see La Rooy, et al., 2009).

Although relatively little contradictory information was provided overall, the majority of contradictory information that was of high investigation-relevance was caused by children retracting earlier denials about aspects of the event(s) being discussed. Again, there are many possible reasons for this, and it is difficult with this type of data to establish the accuracy of any of the details given by the children. Thus, whether these contradictions reflect a positive or negative impact of repeat interviewing is hard to determine. On the other hand, it is plausible that these contradictions could merely reflect delayed, accurate, disclosure rather than inaccurate testimony, thus supporting the use of second interviews to encourage further recall.

Children's reminiscence of both high investigation-relevant and consistent information in second interviews presents a persuasive argument for the usefulness of repeat interviews with child victims. Children provided very similar numbers of new, high investigation-relevant details in second interviews as they did in their first interviews. In fact, for four children, the second interview provided the disclosure that the child did not give in

the first interview. Consequently, there is a high likelihood that these investigations may not have progressed to court without these second interviews.

Limitations and Further Research

The main limitation of the present study is related to the nature of the transcripts. All had progressed to court and so may be unrepresentative of the majority of child sexual abuse cases which do not ever progress to court (NSPCC, 2014). Additionally, these were all cases where an expert opinion on the interview quality was thought appropriate. These two aspects could reflect the quality of the interviews generally: the interviews may be conducted sufficiently well for the authorities to determine the evidence as strong enough to go to court, but not conducted so well that their quality is unarguable. Additionally, as with most research using field interviews, it is not known how accurate the information provided by the children is. Thus, although the second interviews could be helpful in terms of children providing further information about the event(s), it is not possible to be certain whether this additional information is accurate, or even as accurate as the information given in the child's first interview. The generalisability of the results regarding third interviews are affected by the very small sample size (n = 7). However, they suggest that a third interview may prove useful in some cases, as only one significant difference was found between the second and third interviews (differing proportions of item details). However, a larger sample size is essential for less tentative conclusions. Another limitation relates to the varying interviewers involved. In some cases, all the interviews with a child were conducted by the same interviewer, but in other cases they were conducted by different interviewers and from different professional groups. The limited research suggests that children are more accurate in second interviews if they are interviewed by the same person as in the first interview

(Bjorklund et al., 2000). However, a comparison was not possible in the present study due to the small sample size.

Conclusions

This study provides the first analysis of interviewer and interviewee behaviours during unforeseen repeat interviews conducted with typically-developing child victims/witnesses in the UK. The analysis provides compelling arguments for encouraging where appropriate the use of second interviews in cases in which child testimony is key. No negative effects of repeat interviewing were found. Interviewers conducted second interviews in similar ways to first interviews. Child responses were also similar across first and second interviews in terms of amount and types of details provided. The repeat interviews seemed effective in gaining extra, high investigation-relevant information. Finally, not only did second interviews reveal new information, but this information was largely consistent with the children's prior accounts, while the majority of contradictions emerged from children disclosing details regarding events they had denied in their first interview. Unfortunately, the interviews generally involved over-reliance on less desirable types of questioning (option-posing and suggestive). However, the present study indicates that if general standards of interviewing improve, there is no reason to believe that repeat interviews should not also do so and continue to be of investigative value.

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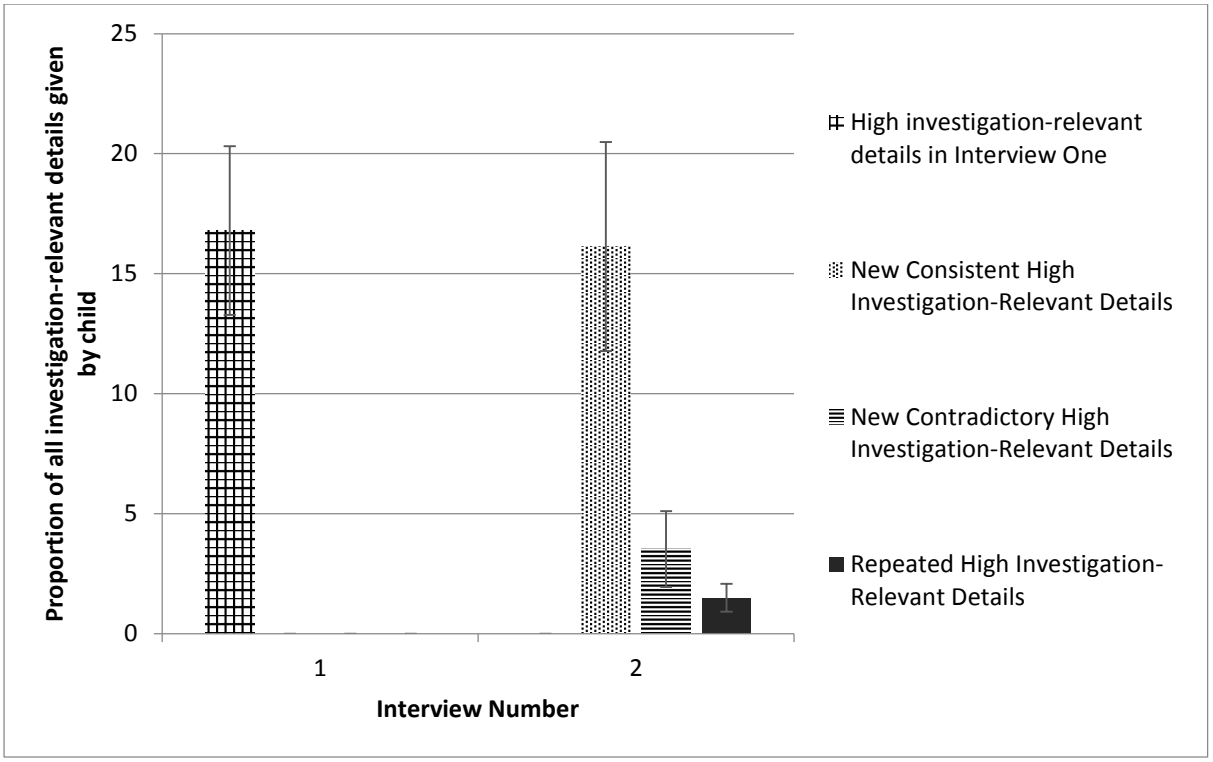

Figure 1. Average percentages of consistent, contradictory and repeated high investigation-relevant details recalled in interview two.

Table 1

Mean percentages of interviewer question types used and child details recalled by type in first and second interviews.

		First Interview	Second Interview
Question Types	Invitation	12.6%	10.1%
	Directive	33.5%	30.1%
	Option-posing	35.1%	37.8%
	Multiple	6.1%	5.7%
	Suggestive	11.0%	14.2%
	Unknown	1.7%	2.1%
Response Types	People	16.5%	12.8%
	Actions	72.2%	73.3%
	Locations	6.1%	6.3%
	Items	1.1%	2.9%*
	Temporal	4.1%	4.7%

*The difference in percentage between interviews one and two is significant at $p < .05$

Table 2

Mean percentages of question types used in the present study's interviews one and two and those of Lamb et al. (2009) and La Rooy et al. (2013)

		Lamb et al. (2009)		La Rooy et al. (2013)	
Question Type	Present Study	Standard	Protocol	Pre-2011[a]	Post-2011[a]
Invitations	11.3%	6.8%	34.1%	7%	15%
Directives	31.8%	43.1%	27.5%	39%	49%
Option-Posing	36.5%	27.2%	17.9%	37%	34%
Suggestive	12.6%	8.29%	5.6%	17%	2%

Note. Table includes only directly comparable categories of question type. Lamb et al.'s (2009) additional, omitted category was 'summary', in comparison to the present study's 'multiple' and 'unknown' question types. La Rooy et al. (2013) used only four categories.

[a] Some of the transcripts from these samples were included in the current sample.