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Using court reports to enhance knowledge of sexual abuse in sport

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Abstract

Sexual abuse in sport is a relatively recent addition to the research agenda but has risen to prominence as a result of a number of highly-publicised cases. For scientists it is difficult to gain access to data on sexual abuse in sport through conventional survey or interview methods, or to verify media reports of such cases. One potential alternative source of data is court reports.

The study reported here used a small number of court reports to examine a range of issues confronting those researching sexual abuse in sport. The following two questions were investigated: What characterised the perpetrators who were sentenced for sexual abuse in sport? How useful is content analysis of court reports for acquiring more knowledge about sexual abuse cases in sport?

Altogether 15 sport-based cases were revealed from the Norwegian Lovdata (Lawdata) website. Some perpetrator-related patterns of risk and harm arising within and across the cases were examined: the findings confirm many of those of previous studies in relation to the characteristics of perpetrators and the absence of any perpetrator stereotype. The article concludes that court reports provide one valuable, yet still incomplete, source of information against which to test our understanding of sexual abuse in sport.

Keywords: sexual abuse, court reports, sport organizations, gender

Sexual abuse in sport is a relatively recent addition to the research agenda but has risen to prominence as a result of a number of highly-publicised cases (Brackenridge and Fasting, 2002). Since the problem was first recognised it has prompted policy responses by several major sport agencies including the International Olympic Committee (2007), Sport England (CPSU, 2003), and the Norwegian Olympic Committee, Paralympic and Confederation of Sports (2011).

Sexual abuse in the context of sport is variously defined. An often referred definition is the one of Celia Brackenridge who describes sexual abuse as ‘groomed or coerced involvement in sexual acts ...’ (Brackenridge 2001, p. 34). A similar definition is found in the newly published brochure from the Norwegian NOC: “Abuse implies that a person offends another person’s rights. By sexual abuse we mean to trick or coerce a person into a sexual act the person does not want, or is not sufficiently mature to consent to” (NIF 2011, p 8). The athlete who is the target in sexual abuse is described as either the victim or survivor of sexual abuse (Kelly et al. 1995). According to previous research, perpetrators of sexual abuse in sport are most often, but not exclusively, men and most often occupy coaching positions (Brackenridge, 2001). However, such is the range of other roles associated with known cases of abuse in sport, including team managers, doctors, physiotherapists, trainers and so on, that Kirby et al. (2000) adopted the term ‘authority figure’ instead.

Several qualitative studies have been conducted to illuminate the social and interpersonal dynamics of sexual abuse in sport (Kirby, Greaves and Hankivsky, 2000; Brackenridge, 1997; Cense and Brackenridge, 2001; Leahy, Pretty and Tenenbaum, 2002). Cense (1997), for example, showed that early signs of grooming were a strong indicator of later abuse. Eight athletes (six women and two men) reported abuse before they were 16 years old in that study and, for seven of them, the abuse lasted between two and five years. All abusers were male coaches and the grooming started with the perpetrator taking care of

the victim and becoming virtually a father figure to them. All victims said that the coach had more or less controlled their lives. The data showed that differences in age and maturity were risk factors for the athlete. Many had a poor relationship with their parents so the perpetrator had a chance to get closer to the victims, especially on tours, during massage, at the coach's home and during drives to and from practice: all these were risk factors. Shame or fear of being frozen out of the sport, fear of not being believed and positive feelings towards the coach were all factors that contributed to the maintenance of the abusive relationship. Using interview data from sexually abused athletes, Brackenridge (2001) categorised risk factors for abuse under those to do with coach/perpetrator, the athlete and the sport. Risk factors for the coach are listed as:

- has unsatisfactory sexual relationship(s) with peers or partner (or no partner)
- has history of (sexual) relationship difficulty with wife/partner and/or children
- possibly models self on own parents lack of empathy or exploitation
- suffers from thwarted personal ambitions
- derives self-esteem from control over others and public affirmation
- has access to the means to isolate intended victims (often using own car or team bus, hotel and/or own home)
- pushes back interpersonal boundaries through ambiguous sexual behaviours (touching, massage, non-verbal flirting)
- sets very demanding technical and training goals
- makes public comparisons between the ability of the intended victim and that of her peers

Risk factors for the athletes are:

- suffers from psychological vulnerability that may be compounded by sensory or motor impairment

- is relatively youthful or inexperienced in the sport compared with the authority figure senior
- is sexually naïve or immature/around puberty
- is at or near the ‘stage of imminent achievement’ [just before peak performance]
- may show signs of disordered eating (especially bulimia)
- has distant relationship with parents/carers
- affords the coach complete control of her life
- is totally dedicated to the coach or authority figure who assumes the status of a father figure

As indicated, very few quantitative studies have been undertaken that focus on sexual abuse case data in sport. Kirby et al. (2000) reported survey data among 266 current and former Olympians in Canada. They found that 22 per cent had had intercourse with an authority figure in sport and for 7 per cent of these (seven male and 16 female) the sexual contact (oral, anal or penetrative) was forced. Twenty-three respondents were under 16 years of age at the time of the sexual assault.

Leahy, Pretty and Tenenbaum (2002) surveyed sexual abuse in sport among 370 athletes, at both elite and club level, including both males and females, about. 31 per cent of the women and 21 per cent of the men had experienced legally-defined sexual abuse at some point in their lives. Of these, 41 per cent of the women and 29 per cent of the men had experienced this within a sport context. Among the elite athletes, 46 per cent had been abused by authority figures (which included coaches). Among the club athletes this figure was 26 per cent. The legal outcomes of these cases were not recorded. One problem with such surveys is that they usually attract only a low response rate. For example, the Canadian and Australian studies, mentioned above, drew response rates of just 22 per cent and 19 per cent respectively.

A case analysis of a range of different abuses and poor practice in sport was conducted by Brackenridge, Bringer and Bishop (2005). Using SPSSX, they analysed 50 variables among 152 referrals recorded by the English Football Association, of which 132 were deemed usable for research purposes. However, they found that the reporting systems were flawed: for example, the age of the perpetrator was not recorded systematically, being mentioned in only 17 of the cases. 11 per cent of cases concerned sexual abuse. In this study, seven of the cases eventually resulted in a criminal conviction and six were dismissed from the court. The abused were between four and 23 yrs old, with an average age of 11.8 yrs. Among the 132 cases, 100 of the alleged victims were boys, 17 were girls, and in 15 cases there was no information about victim gender. Coaches/teachers/instructors (N=46) constituted the majority of alleged abusers. In 122 cases the perpetrator was male and four were female; one involved both a male and female and in five cases this information was missing. The authors noted the limitations in the data and emphasised the importance of sport organisations becoming more systematic in the way they record the details of such cases.

Brackenridge et al. (2008) also conducted an analysis of 159 cases of criminally defined sexual abuse in sport, reported in the print media over a period of 15 years. The main aim of the study was to identify the nature of sex offending in sport, focusing on the methods and locations of offences. Also, in this study the perpetrators were coaches, teachers or instructors directly involved with the athletes (98 per cent) and, of the 159 cases examined, 113 had resulted in a conviction. The findings also identified specific themes within the perpetrators' strategies including 'intimate', 'aggressive', and 'dominant' modes of interaction, which were reported to be consistent with themes from studies outside sport. The authors questioned the quality of the data, however, because journalistic accounts include only limited details of specific offending events. Also, the data in media reports are not

necessarily verifiable and reporting errors often occur. This makes such reports potentially unreliable and thus somewhat unsatisfactory as the basis for testing research hypotheses.

One of the most difficult challenges facing any researcher of sexual abuse is to gain access to data. In sport this task is made even more difficult for a number of reasons. First, unless required to do so by their national sport body or funding agencies, many sport organisations do not have case recording systems. Next, where these systems do exist, they use different templates and media (paper based or electronic) and tend to use idiosyncratic rather than nationally- or internationally-agreed criteria for describing or making judgements about alleged misdemeanours. Finally, and arguably most importantly, many sport authorities are reluctant to expose data about sexual maltreatment in their sports for reasons of reputational risk, including fear of negative publicity, loss of sponsorship or loss of members, hence they resist approaches by researchers for access to abuse case files.

Toftegaard Nielsen (2004) established a database, called Crime in Sport Statistics – KISS) to identify patterns of abuse in sport in Denmark. He negotiated access to police files for cases in which the perpetrators had been found guilty and sentenced. The files yielded 160 cases from sport, covering the period from 1980 to 2002. They covered a range of crimes from use of child pornography to rape. Altogether, 20 different sports were represented: about two thirds of the cases had taken place in individual sports and one third in team sports with 63 per cent of the victims being boys compared with 37 per cent girls. Only 10 per cent of the victims performed at the elite level and the rest participated recreationally. The average age of the perpetrators' first offence was 35 years, and average age of the sexually abused athletes was 12 years old. The analysis revealed that 13 per cent had experienced the abuse over five or more years. On average, it lasted seven to 12 months. It happened mainly in the home of the perpetrator or in connection with sport activities. In nine out of ten cases the perpetrator had used rewards to entice the victim to cooperate. In other cases, the

perpetrator had played on the victim's feelings of guilt and shame. In four of ten cases, the coercion of the victim had happened in connection with the consumption of alcohol. This Danish study was the first to use court reports as a source of data on sexual abuse in sport.

Why are court reports of sexual abuse in sport of interest? First, because suppositions that sport may be a specific site for sexual abuse can only be tested if sufficient, reliable and verifiable data are available. Secondly, sport authorities need to understand their own 'field' (Webb, Shirato & Danaher, 2002) and the dynamics of abuse within that field in order to develop effective abuse prevention strategies. Next, the gender order of sport is strongly hetero-normative and patriarchal (Messner and Sabo, 1994) so it is of interest to understand from these sources whether and how this might affect patterns of sexual perpetration and victimisation in sport. Finally, most of the previously published testimonies from abused athletes give only one perspective – the voice of the victim/survivor – so the voice of the abuser is usually missing, or certainly underrepresented, and the situational context is often unknown. Our understanding of the relational and situational parameters of sexual abuse in sport is therefore deficient.

In the face of the difficulties identified above, of gaining access to data on sexual abuse in sport through conventional survey or interview methods, or verifying media reports of such cases, one potential alternative source of data is court reports. Arguably, court reports present a verified, factual account of events that research interviews or media reports cannot do. To this extent, the data within them should be more reliable than those from other sources. Court reports share clear, legally defined thresholds – prosecution and conviction – and thus offer better terminological clarity than research studies in which researchers use their own definitions of sexual abuse.

What patterns of analysis might be of interest? First, 'within-case' patterns: this kind of analysis reveals the narrative of the abuse process – the what? when? where? and how? It

can also describe the abuser's explanation for his or her behaviour (why?) and give voice to the survivor/the athlete who was sexually abused. Secondly, sport is a site in which victims of sexual abuse are especially hesitant to disclose or report their experiences. For this reason, it is thought that sport has a high number of false negatives (cases that occur without being noticed or reported).

The data reported below are from a study that analysed Norwegian court reports in which the perpetrators had been sentenced for sexual abuse crimes in a sport setting. The study set out to investigate the following questions:

1. What characterised the perpetrators who were sentenced for sexual abuse in sport and what seem to be the risk factors?
2. How useful is content analysis of court reports for acquiring more knowledge about sexual abuse cases in sport?¹

Methods

The court reports were located at the Norwegian Lovdata (Lawdata) website. Lovdata was established on July 1st 1981, as a private foundation by the Norwegian Ministry of Justice and the Faculty of Law at the University of Oslo. The purpose of Lovdata is to establish and operate legal information systems on a not-for-profit basis. Among its main-activities are the operation of a website with a legal information service and the development of software for maintaining and running large databases. The database from 1940-2007 was examined using the following search words to retrieve cases where sexual abuse had happened in a setting related to sport: coach +abuse + sport, sexual+sport, coach+gender, athlete+abuse, sexual abuse+sport, abuse+gender+sport, sport+harassment, sport+abuse+ leader/manager.

The Norwegian court system is designed such that, if the antagonists do not agree when they hold a pre-court settlement meeting, then case has to be taken to court. In Norway this process starts with the district or city court. If a party is not satisfied with the decision taken here then they can appeal to the Court of Appeal. Finally, they can appeal to the Supreme Court. Searches were done at all these levels - district court/city court, court of appeal and Supreme Court.

Simple content analysis of the court reports was used to answer the first research question and followed the method for analysing text documents described by Johannesen and Tufte (2002). They divide the analysis into four phases: overall impression, coding, condensation and summary. During the coding process we sought to find meaningful elements in the text which were then grouped under the following main categories: power, perpetrator and risk factors. Below each of these main headings were four to seven subcategories. The program for qualitative text analysis MAXQDA was used in this process. This program is also very helpful in the condensation of text because it allows for the extraction of the different elements. Finally, a short summary of each case was made (see Appendix).

Presentation and discussion of findings

Findings relating to research question 1, perpetrator characteristics and risk factors, are discussed first. 15 cases of sexual abuse in sport (11 from the Court of Appeal and four from the Supreme Court) were found, the oldest dating from 1956. Compared with the Danish study of police files, the total number of cases is very few. However, not all court cases were reported to the database during this time, particularly from the oldest period and from the district/city court. It is also up to the different court districts whether or not they want to report the case to the Lovdata database. In addition, the majority of cases are settled

at the district court level. All cases that we found had therefore been appealed. The perpetrators were all sentenced according to one or more sections under 'Chapter 19: Sexual Offences' in the Norwegian General Civil Penal Code.

The sports in which the abuse took place were: Gymnastics (3), Not known (2), Football (2), Basketball (1), Swimming (1), Shooting (1), Skiing (1), Handball (1), Karate (1), Track & Field (1) and Trampolining (1). Although the numbers are very small we notice that, as in the Danish study, individual sport seems to be a risk factor. Studies on sexual *harassment* have found that harassment seems to occur in all sports (Fasting, Brackenridge & Sundgot-Borgen, 2004) but this may be different for abuse cases. One explanation could be that the perpetrator, particularly the coach, perhaps has more opportunities to be alone with the athlete in an individual sport.

Except in two cases, all the victims were girls and all the perpetrators were men. This is in accordance with the studies from sport presented earlier, and general crime statistics. In Norway in 2009, of 675 persons sentenced for a sexual crime, only eight were women (Statistics Central Bureau, 2010). The youngest abuser in the sport dataset was 19 years old and the oldest was 58 when the first incident happened. Nine of the abusers were aged between 25 and 40 years. In terms of the duration of the abuse the range was one to six years with the average length being 1.8 years. Regarding the civil status of the perpetrators, seven were married or living with a partner at the time, two were divorced or separated, two were unmarried, nine had paid employment and six did not. Those employed did everything from blue collar jobs to being a head physician. In conclusion, we can state that no clear profile of a perpetrator emerged. The same was found in a study about sexually harassing coaches where the data suggested that: "rather than being one-type only, sexually harassing coaches select from a repertoire that may include several different harassment scripts. They vary these according to situational conditions" (Fasting & Brackenridge 2009, p 21). That there is no "

typical abuser” is also confirmed in studies of sexual abuse of children outside sport: as Mossinge (2000, p. 32) writes: “ ... courts sometimes look for characteristics that can be classed as ‘typical’ in offenders - there are no grounds for talking of a particular character make-up of those who have abused children sexually”. Except for one case, all the victims were under age 16 when the abuse started, one being as young as 6 years.

Concerning perpetrator risk factors, the analysis of the reports revealed nine cases in which there were evidence of how the perpetrator had purposively selected their victims. Case 3, for example, shows how the perpetrator tried to develop a friendship with the victim: “X was a talented player and during the autumn a friendship developed between the coach and his student”. The accused was then 25 years old and she was 12 years old. The relationship developed in such a way that he started driving her to and from practice, and after a while they also met in other situations.

Clear athlete risk factors were found in only 5 cases. Vulnerability and isolation are illustrated in this case, for example: “B had a lot of respect for the accuser’s football and coaching practice, had a deep trust in him as a coach and person, and developed a close relationship to him. She had had problems after her parents were divorced and had – the way she experienced it – not a trustworthy relationship to her parents. She felt among others that she was not ‘seen’ by her mother. The accused took the time to talk with her and praised her. Because of the close and intimate contact that was established. B experienced it as like getting a ‘new parent’ or a ‘father substitute’”.

Why are there so few recorded cases of sexual abuse in sport in the Norwegian court reports? And how do these data compare with those from other European jurisdictions? Unfortunately, it is not possible to answer these questions since no similar studies of incidence data have been undertaken. However, we speculate that the cultural conditions and traditions within Norway are aligned with liberal democratic principles and sympathetic to

social welfare and human rights issues: this, in itself, could be a reason why the incidence level in Norway appears so low. Norway is comparatively advanced in terms of gender equity in wider society, and perceived as such in sport as well (United Nation Development Program, UNDP date?). So, it might be that there has been a strong assumption in Norwegian sport of an embedded human rights culture and that this has acted as a mask for ongoing, unrecognised inequalities and abuses in sport.

Alternatively, the low incidence might simply be a positive reflection of the effectiveness of the human rights culture of Norway and Norwegian sport. But there has not been evidence of a child protection discourse in Norwegian sport until very recently. The introduction in 2009 of a legal requirement for police checks on all those involved with children in sport, and adoption in 2010 of guidelines to prevent sexual harassment and abuse in sports, are two examples (NOC 2009, 2011). The absence of such a discourse in Norwegian sport is also symbolic: without a label for a social problem it remains unproblematic and thus attracts no policy attention. Given this, sport abuse data will not be captured in the referral process and, hence, will not appear in the criminal justice records.

What, then, are the advantages and limitation of using court reports as a source of data on sexual abuse in sport? First of all, court reports presents a verified, factual account of events that research interviews or media reports cannot do. Court reports share clear, legally defined thresholds – prosecution and conviction – and thus offer more definitional clarity than research studies in which researchers use their own definitions of sexual abuse. Finally, most of the previously published testimonies from abused athletes give only one perspective – the voice of the victim/survivor – so the voice of the abuser is usually missing, or certainly underrepresented. But the court reports, written as a summary, may well indicate partiality depending on which details the author thinks relevant or important. Since the court reports

are the only source of information it is not possible to know whether there are additional relevant details that were not reported.

Limitations

Many cases from the lowest courts do not appear in the legal databases as it is up to each court whether or not the case is sent forward, suggesting that there was an underreporting of the actual incidence figures. Thus, many potentially relevant cases may have been missed that could have increased the (relatively small) sample size. Indeed, one of the main limitations of the data here is the small number of total cases found across the period scrutinised. These may well not be representative of wider patterns of risk and abuse in sport and cannot yield any meaningful statistical analyses.

The cases reported here may simply represent only the 'tip of an iceberg' since it is thought that most cases of sexual abuse in sport never reach the criminal justice system, even if they are recognised as such. The inhibition to report is well documented and rests on a range of fears and anxieties among athletes, and the many bystanders in sport, who may be fully aware of the abuse but reluctant to do anything about it (Brackenridge, 2001; Leahy et al., 2003). Also, very few of the total sex crime complaints are brought to trial. In Norway, of the 4112 sexual crime complaints for 2009 overall, only 475 resulted in a custodial sentence (SSB 2009).

Data entry errors, that are typically associated with all large databases, are not estimated or quantified in Lovdata. More significantly, cases of plea bargaining can skew the legal decisions and thus the attrition patterns that emerge in an analysis of court reports, and in cases that perhaps involve multiple victims, are based on specimen cases only.

A court report, written as a summary by staff present in the court room, may be partial depending on which details the author thinks relevant or important. Since the courts reports themselves are the only source of information it is not possible to know whether there might be additional relevant details that were not reported. Missing information in these documents can be considered a major weakness. It would have been advantageous to have been able to interview both the perpetrator and the victim in each case in order to verify and expand the information. The reports are anonymised, however, so it is not possible to trace those involved in order to ask for interviews. Additionally, court reports vary enormously in the amount of information contained and this undermines their trustworthiness. The results here say little about demographic issues: family and work are sometimes reported but other things such as the perpetrator history, their psychological state, or other family relationships are rarely reported.

Each report represents a summary from a court case in which the accused is one of the most important informants. It may therefore be that they consciously hold back information, or distort it, in order to evade a serious sentence. Arguably, in confidential interviews, the perpetrator might report more than in a situation where the information can be used against them (www.noabuse.no/so/pedofil/pedo.rtf 16.03.2011) The reporting of sexual abuse via the court system or from the perpetrator him or herself is therefore subject to great uncertainty. This has relevance for truthfulness and the weight that we can put on findings about sexual abusers where researchers' work is based on data from perpetrators within the legal system.

Overall, court reports have certain limitations since they are principally tools of the criminal justice system and not research tools. They cannot, for example, reveal the longer term consequences of sexual abuse for the victim, perpetrator or the organisation. They are based primarily on descriptive data rather than analytic or explanatory accounts. They may

also be distorted by the process of plea bargaining by which the accused admits 'lesser' crimes in order to avoid more serious criminal judgement. Also, certain variables of interest to researchers are not routinely recorded in court reports, such as the sexual orientation of the perpetrator and the sexually abused athlete. In conclusion, court reports provide one valuable, yet still incomplete, source of information against which to test our understanding of sexual abuse in sport.

Conclusions

This article has used a small set of court reports to examine a range of issues confronting those researching sexual abuse in sport. First, it considered the difficulties for researchers of accessing verifiable data on the subject, and in quantities large enough to enable sensible analyses to be conducted. Secondly, some perpetrator-related patterns of risk arising within and across the cases were examined: the findings confirm many of those of previous studies in relation to the characteristics of perpetrators and the absence of any perpetrator stereotype.

What is the future for sexual abuse prevention in Norwegian sport? In 2009, the Norwegian Olympic Committee decided to mandate police checks for all those involved with children in sport, and in 2010 new guidelines to prevent sexual harassment and abuse to occur in sport were adopted. This was an important step since it should reduce the potential number of sexual abusers in sports clubs. The guidelines also suggest that the understanding of sexual harassment and sexual abuse should be developed through the education of all managers, coaches and athletes. Education is important: indeed, we suggest that, with education, many athlete victims might have been better equipped to resist abuse.

Unless sport organisations can be persuaded to collect systematic data on sexual abuse in their own networks, using agreed definitions and standardised measures, *and* to allow

researchers to have access to such data, then the research community will be forced to continue using media reports, court reports and personal interview testimonies from abused athletes as sources of data. Each of these sources has limitations. Court reports provide one valuable, yet still incomplete, source of information against which to test our understanding of sexual abuse in sport. Future research needs to involve much larger datasets, ideally across more legal jurisdictions, in order to permit statistical testing of hypotheses about patterns of sexual abuse risk and perpetration in sport as well as the many relational and situational issues associated with this problem. This will then provide greater confidence in the evidence base that underpins policy and practice for abuse prevention in sport.

Appendix: Summary of court cases

Case 1: A 40 year old man was convicted for indecent sexual contact with two stepdaughters under the age of 14 and 16, and was sentenced to two years and six months of imprisonment. The incidents, which initially were supposed to be sport massage, on several occasions developed into indecent sexual contact. The perpetrator was a coach in the local soccer club where his stepdaughters were playing.

Case 2: A male soccer coach was convicted for having exploited his position and a young girl's confidence to gain sexual intercourse from a 15 year old girl, and was sentenced to one year and six months imprisonment. The girl was recovering from a disease when the exploitation was completed. The assaults evolved from touching to one incident of sexual intercourse with the excuse that it was a part of the recovery phase.

Case 3: A 33 year old man was convicted for indecent sexual contact with a girl from the age of 13 to the age of 16. The perpetrator got in touch with the victim when he was her

basketball coach and they developed a relationship which he later exploited. He was sentenced two years imprisonment, of which nine months was suspended.

Case 4: A 44 year old man was convicted for indecent sexual contact and indecent sexual acts towards his 13 year old stepdaughter and was sentenced one year and six months of imprisonment. He was also convicted for indecent sexual acts against two female swimmers he was coaching.

Case 5: A coach was convicted for indecent sexual intercourse with a female shooter he was coaching. The exploitation took place for more than four years until the athlete was 18 years old. The perpetrator was sentenced to imprisonment for one year and six months.

Case 6: A cross country skiing coach (born 1933) sexually abused one of his female athletes from the age of 11 until the exploitation was reported when the athlete was 22 years old. The incidents took place approximately once a week. The coach was convicted for indecent sexual contact with someone under the age of 14 and indecent sexual intercourse before the age of 16, and was sentenced to be imprisoned for one year and eight months.

Case 7: In 1956, a 42 year old man was convicted for indecent sexual contact with boys between the ages of 15 and 20 years, and was given a six month sentence of immediate imprisonment. The acts showed signs of planning and were conducted when the offender was on business trips. He was able easily to coax young boys by virtue of his position in organised sport.

Case 8: A 53 year old man was convicted for frequent incidents of indecent sexual contact with a girl from the age of 14 until she was 16 years old, and was sentenced to nine months imprisonment. He was running a karate club where the victim was working out.

Case 9: A 64 year old man was convicted for sexual abuse of four girls between six and eight years old, and was sentenced to three years imprisonment. The most serious incidents, of indecent sexual contact, took place repeatedly in 1995 towards a six years old girl when she was staying over at the offender's house and towards one of her friends when she once also stayed over. The two other cases were indecent sexual acts towards two girls who participated in gymnastics classes where the offender was coaching.

Case 10: A 34 year old man was convicted for unwanted touching of two young females on three different occasions. Both victims were gymnasts who, in the course of events, stayed the night in the gymnastics hall. In one of the incidents the perpetrator lay on top of the victim with penis erect and asked her if she wanted to have sexual intercourse with him. The perpetrator was given a suspended sentence of 30 days imprisonment.

Case 11: A 32 year old man was convicted for two incidents of sexual intercourse with a 14 year old girl, and was given a two year sentence of immediate imprisonment. The incidents took place five years prior to the sentence. The perpetrator was coaching in the local track and field club.

Case 12: A 30 year old man was convicted for violating his position as a handball coach to obtain sexual intercourse with three girls of between 14 and 16 years old. He was given a one year sentence of immediate imprisonment.

Case 13: A 20 year old man was convicted for at least ten incidents of sexual intercourse with a girl of 13 years and nine months. They got to know each other in a sports club where the perpetrator was a coach and the victim an athlete. The sentence was one year of imprisonment.

Case 14: A 26 year old man was convicted for indecent sexual acts and indecent sexual contact towards a ten year old girl. The perpetrator was sentenced to one year six months imprisonment, with six months suspended. The perpetrator was an assistant coach at a gymnastics class where the victim was participating.

Case 15: Two men, aged 31 and 41 years old respectively, were convicted for sexual abuse of underage boys. The 31 year old was given a one year eight month prison sentence. On one occasion he had completed anal sexual intercourse with one of the victims. The 41 year old was given a six month sentence of immediate imprisonment. The acts were mutual masturbation and sucking of genitals. Both of the perpetrators had got in touch with the victims by offering free workouts in training facilities they had at their disposal.

¹ Although the study also considered questions about the dynamics of the power relationships between the perpetrators and the victims, and sought evidence of the various risk factors and grooming processes identified in previous sport research, these issues are not addressed in this article.