

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Evaluation Of Justice System Actors On Forensic Interviews With Children Victims Of Sexual Abuse¹

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Abstract

Forensic Interviewing is a method of communicating with subjects within the Investigation Process, in order to obtain the most accurate information. In recent years, the child's involvement in the legal system, both as victims of crime and witnesses, has increased. The problem facing the Researcher, is that there is not enough information in the literature regarding the evaluations of judges and professional staff on Forensic Interviews with children who are victims of sexual abuse. This study was planned in Istanbul and was carried out in three major courthouses in Istanbul. The research data was analysed using the Maxqda 2020 qualitative data analysis program. It was determined that the training on Forensic Interview with sexually abused children had been found sufficient by most of the judges, but insufficient by more than half of the professional staff according to the result of the research. It was determined that more than half of the judges did not attend the training and those who did attend, were unwilling to use the child- friendly interview rooms. Professional staff declared that there should be more practical training in the future training programs. It was found that in Istanbul, each judge was responsible for roughly 60 trials each month and this situation puts time pressure on them. This article was produced from a doctoral thesis.

Keywords: Abuse, Child, Evidence, Forensic Interview, System Theory

Öz

Adli görüşme maksimum kalitede bilgi elde etmek için soruşturma sürecinde herhangi biriyle iletişim kurma yöntemidir. Son yıllarda çocukların suç mağduru ve tanık olarak hukuk sistemine katılımı artmıştır. Araştırmanın problemi hakim ve meslek elemanlarının cinsel istismar mağduru çocuklarla yapılan adli görüşmeye ilişkin değerlendirmelerine yönelik literatürde yeterli bilginin bulunmamasıdır. Araştırma İstanbul ilinde planlanmış ve üç büyük adliyede yürütülmüştür. Araştırma verileri Maxqda veri analiz programı kullanılarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Gerçekleştirilen araştırma sonucunda cinsel istismar mağduru çocukla adli görüşme eğitimini hakimlerin çoğunun yeterli, meslek elemanlarının yarısından fazlasının ise yetersiz bulunduğu belirlenmiştir. Eğitime hakimlerin yarısından fazlasının katılmamış olduğu ve eğitime katılmayan hakimlerin çocuk dostu adli görüşme odalarını kullanmak konusunda isteksiz oldukları belirlenmiştir. Meslek elemanları bundan sonraki eğitim programlarında daha fazla uygulama yapılması gerektiğini belirtmiştir. İstanbul'da bir hakimin ayda ortalama 60 davaya baktığı bu durumun hakimler üzerinde zaman baskısına yol açtığı tespit edilmiştir. Bu makale doktora tezinden üretilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İstismar, Çocuk, Kanıt, Adli Görüşme, Sistem Teorisi.

¹ This study is derived from the doctoral thesis by Hüseyin Batman, under supervision of Elif Gökçearslan Çiftçi titled as "Hakimlerin ve Meslek Elemanlarının Cinsel İstismar Mağduru Çocuklarla Yapılan Adli Görüşmeye İlişkin Değerlendirmeleri" in the Department of Social Work, Health Sciences Institute, Ankara University.

Introduction

Child sexual abuse is defined as any sexual activity performed with a child by an adult or another child who has power over the child without the child's consent (Munro, 2000 as cited in Chiteraka, 2012). All behaviors such as pornography, exhibitionism, touching the genital area and rape are identified as types of sexual abuse. In sexual abuse, it doesn't matter whether or not the child has consent (Polat, 2007). Child sexual abuse (CSA) has been found to be widespread in all nations (Barth, Bermetz, Heim, Trelle, & Tonia, 2013 as cited in Mathews & Vezina, 2019). For instance; according to the 2015–16 Crime Survey for England and Wales, 7% of people aged between 16 and 59 reported that they were sexually abused as a child. Although this survey did not include young children or all forms of sexual abuse, this still equates to over two million victims and survivors in that age bracket across England and Wales a substantial proportion of the population (Obe, Evans, Frank & Sharpling, 2018). In Turkey, according to statistics of the Ministry of Justice each month 650 children attend court in relation to child sexual abuse allegations (Child Sexual Abuse Report, 2016). Children can take part in the judicial system as defendants, witnesses or victims (Çağlar & Türk, 2019).

Forensic interview is the most important element of the investigation in terms of evidence in an abuse case (Korkman, Pakkanen & Laajasalo, 2017). During a criminal investigation police officers strive to answer two primary questions, namely what has occurred and who is responsible (Milne & Bull, 2006). When attempting to answer these questions and in order to bring the perpetrators of crime to justice, police officers require information. One of the primary sources of such information are witnesses and victims (Dando & Milne, 2009). The issues of child testimony are quite complex; the lack of physical evidence, the repetition of critical scenes and the witness's lack of maturity make the investigation very difficult. Because the alleged perpetrator is usually a relative of the child, details gained from an interview of a child are mainly used to characterize the offense and provide clues to

corroborate their testimony (Larsson & Lamb, 2009 as cited in Launay, 2015).

In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of children entering the judicial system in Turkey. Looking at the data of the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK), the number of children coming or brought to the security units in 2017 increased by 5% compared to the previous year and reached 335,242 (hurriyet.com.tr, 2019). The actual prevalence of sexual abuse is more difficult to document accurately, because few victims disclose such abuse for various reasons, including fear, guilt, repression, and shame (Finkelhor, 1979; Russell, 1983; Schultz, 1973 as cited in Palmer, Frantz, Armsworth, Swank, Copley & Bush, 1999).

There are three different models to interview sexually abused children in Turkey, Child Protection Units (Çocuk Koruma Birimleri), Child Monitoring Centers (Çocuk İzlem Merkezleri) and Forensic Interview Rooms (Adli Görüşme Odaları) (Batman, 2018). The first Child Protection Unit was established in 1998, the first Child Monitoring Center was established in 2012 and the first Forensic Interview Room was established in 2017 (Batman & Gökçearsan, 2021).

The main goal of the Child-Friendly Forensic Interview Room is described as enabling child protection through principles of interviewing children in a friendly environment by experienced staff. According to the standards, the interview is carried out by a judge in the presence of a psychologist/social worker (Ümit, Çavdar & Yağcıoğlu, 2014). It was stated by the participants in the research that the Ministry of Justice provided 5-day Forensic Interview Rooms Training for judges, prosecutors and professional staff in the province of Antalya between 2017 and 2018. However, it has been determined that among the judges and professional staff interviewed by the researcher, there are people who have not yet undergone forensic interview room training (Batman, 2021).

The aim of this research is to get information from judges and professional staff about forensic interviewing of children that has been carried out by victims of child sexual abuse and assess their answers in line with the literature. Moreover, the child friendly Forensic Interview Room (AGO) application, which is tried to be popularized by the

Ministry of Justice, is to be handled within the framework of the system theory approach. This study will start with literature review about forensic interview with sexual abused children the dynamics and effects of child sexual abuse and developments in forensic interview rooms in Turkey. Secondly information will be given about methodology of the research and it's findings.

Literature Review

Interviewing is at the heart of any police investigation and thus is the root of achieving justice in society (Milne, Shaw & Bull, 2007). The interviewing of witnesses and suspects is a core function of policing across the world (Griffiths & Milne, 2006). Gudjonsson (2006) states that investigative interviews are an important form of evidence gathering. The main goal of conducting an investigative interview is to obtain information that is detailed, complete, comprehensible, valid, and relevant to the legal issues in the case that need to be established and proved. Griffiths and Milne (2006) suggest that the interviewing of witnesses and suspects is a core function of policing across the world.

Child witness refers to any child who is a victim of, or observes as a spectator, an event and who subsequently furnishes a report for any investigation or trial (Towl et al, 2008). Prescott, Milne & Clarke (2011) assert that witness testimony is an important primary resource in the investigation of criminal acts. In a survey questioning 159 police officers in the UK, Kebbell and Milne (1998) found that 36% believed that witnesses always or almost always provided critical information to aid the investigation, and further 51% believed that witnesses usually provided critical information for the progression of the case (Santtila, Korkman & Sandnabba, 2004).

It has been suggested that (Paterson, 2001, p.15) over the last few decades the capabilities of child witnesses have been of great interest to professionals in the legal field of child protection. This interest reflects increased awareness of child maltreatment and a subsequent increase in children's involvement in the legal system (Malloy et al, 2011). In a number of countries legislation has been brought in to allow criminal courts to receive

children's evidence. For instance, in England and Wales in 1988, legislation was introduced permitting children to testify in criminal trials via "live video link" in another room in the court building (Milne & Bull 1999).

Children who are victims of crimes in the justice system have difficulties in communicating their experiences to the relevant authorities. The basis of these difficulties is the fact that children are exposed to sexual abuse in the event that they experience, in the absence of any witnesses other than themselves and in the absence of physical evidence (Powell & Barnett, 2015). The nature and dynamics of sexual abuse and sexually abusive relationships are often traumatic. When sexual abuse occurs in childhood it can hinder normal social growth and be a cause of many different psycho-social problems (Maltz, 2002 as cited in Hall & Hall, 2011). Children should be interviewed as early as possible, because the longer the delay between an experience and the initial interview, the more likely it is that children will forget the experience and consequently be vulnerable to suggestive influences. Increased delay is especially a problem in sexual abuse cases (Gitlin and Pezdek, 2009). Child sexual abuse differs from other forms of childhood victimization in that there is usually no witness apart from the victim and the accused and often no physical evidence. Therefore, children must tell someone about it or someone who suspects abuse questions the child about it (Bussey, 2009).

Interviewing is acknowledged as a complex skill. It is process of conversational exchange (Shepherd, 1991) in which both the witness and the interviewing officer play an integral role (Dando & Milne, 2009). Effective interviewing of witnesses requires a great deal of skill and ability on the part of the interviewer (Rogers & Lewis, 2007). The forensic interviewer is considered a fact finder, objectively gathering details of legal relevance and documenting children's statements verbatim, if possible. He or she is supportive but remains neutral to the veracity of the information provided and refrains from a relationship that could unduly influence children's reports (Saywitz & Camparo, 2009). Forensic interviewers have a duty to be familiar with current interview methods and the supporting literature (Stewart et al, 2011).

Establishing rapport with children is an essential step in investigative interviews and should precede and discussion of suspected child abuse (Hershkowitz, 2011). Cherryman and Bull (2000) suggest that rapport building is an important factor in the success of an interview (Cherryman & Bull, 2000). It has been stated that (Lamb & Garretson, 2003) interviewers should build rapport with witnesses because this facilitates disclosure and maximizes informativeness.

Method

The main purpose of this research was to determine the assessments of judges and Professional staff (who carry out forensic interview with the child) regarding the forensic interview with children who are victims of sexual abuse and to evaluate their responses within the scope of the literature. In addition, to that, to analyze child friendly interview room that has been tried to be disseminated by the Ministry of Justice within the framework of the system teory approach. The data of the study were collected using two methods, qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative data were obtained with homogenous sample. In the study, similar sampling was used as it was aimed to collect information about the evaluations of heavy penal judges and professional staff regarding the forensic interview with children who were victims of sexual abuse. Since there were no forensic interview room in all courthouses in Istanbul at the time the research conducted, the research was carried out only in three big courthouses of Istanbul. Legal permission was obtained from the Council of Judges and Prosecutors to apply the research to judges, and from the Ministry of Justice General Directorate of Personnel to apply it to Professional staff. Also, ethics committee approval for the study was obtained from Ankara University.

In this research, interviews were conducted with professional staff (Social worker, psychologists etc.) who met with children who were victims of sexual abuse in the courthouse and with the judges of the high criminal court who administered the sexual abuse cases. Before starting the research, it was planned to interview at least 15 judges and 15 professional staff, but

during the interview process, the researcher made face to face interviews with a total of 25 professional staff and 18 heavy penalty judges working in three courthouses in Istanbul with his personal efforts. The interviewed professional staff are social worker, psychologist and psychological counselor. 13 of the professional staff are female (58%), 12 are male (48%), 4 of the judges are female (22.23%), 14 are male (77.77%). The researcher coded three courthouses in Istanbul with the colours white, blue and yellow, also judges with "star" and professional staff with "flower" names.

Qualitative data were obtained through face to face interviews with judges and professional staff, accompanied by a semi-structured interview form prepared in advance. Qualitative data were obtained by asking 13 questions in the "semi-structured interview form" used in the research. Within the scope of the research, a Preliminary Information Form was created by the researcher based on the National Child Health and Human Development Institute Protocol information (NICHD), which is widely used in the United States for heavy criminal court judges and professional staff, and a Socio-Demographical Characteristics Form in order to obtain information about individual characteristics. The quantitative data obtained through these forms.

At the beginning of the face to face interviews, a brief information about the purpose of the research was given, and a voluntary participation form was signed, stating that the confidentiality of the information to be obtained from them would be provided by the researcher and would only be used for scientific purposes. Since the voice recording of the interviews with the professionals was taken within the permissions, the researcher did not rush to note the expressions of the professionals, the time was used optimally and there was no data loss. Few of the assize judges allowed audio recording, so the researcher took note of the judges' statements.

It was easier to interview professionals working in research an courthouses compared to judges. Conducting interviews with colleagues who share the same room with the interviewed professionals or work in a close room has been one of the issue that facilitated the process. Interviewing the judges

was one of the most challenging parts of the research process. Professional staff and clerks were asked in order to obtain information about which judge had a hearing and when it was available. Following the information obtained from here, permission was obtained from each judge in his room and a request was made to hold an interview. It was found remarkable that the two judges refused to hold an interview on the grounds that they did not use the “forensic interview rooms” and that they did not favor this practice. The audio recordings obtained from the interviews conducted by the researcher were transferred to Microsoft Word in the computer environment. Voice recording transcriptions of all participants, including 25 professional staff and 18 judges, were performed by the researcher. Within the scope of the research, the interviews were completed within a month, and the audio recording solutions of the data were completed between April and August 2019. Then, the analyzed data were printed out and read more than three times, and themes were tried to be determined. The analyses of the research data was carried out using the Maxqda 2020 qualitative data analysis program. In line with this program, the subheadings of the themes were created, tables

coding and making corrections when necessary (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016).

Findings

The research findings are given under the following headings: i) Definition of Child Victim, ii) Definition and Importance of Forensic Interview Room, iii) Child Statement, iv) Differences Between Child and Adult Victims, v) Forensic Interview Training with Child Victim. At the same time some findings are presented in tables.

Definition of Child Victim: Within the scope of this main title, the question of how that define the child victim was asked. The features most expressed by the participants are; exposure to trauma and in need of help.

The most frequently mentioned topics in the characteristics of victimized children were “Exposure to Trauma” and “To be in Need” The opinions of some of the participants were as follows.

The victim has traces of trauma, can be suicidal, attempts to cut himself, needs psychological support (Ancha, Judge, 50).

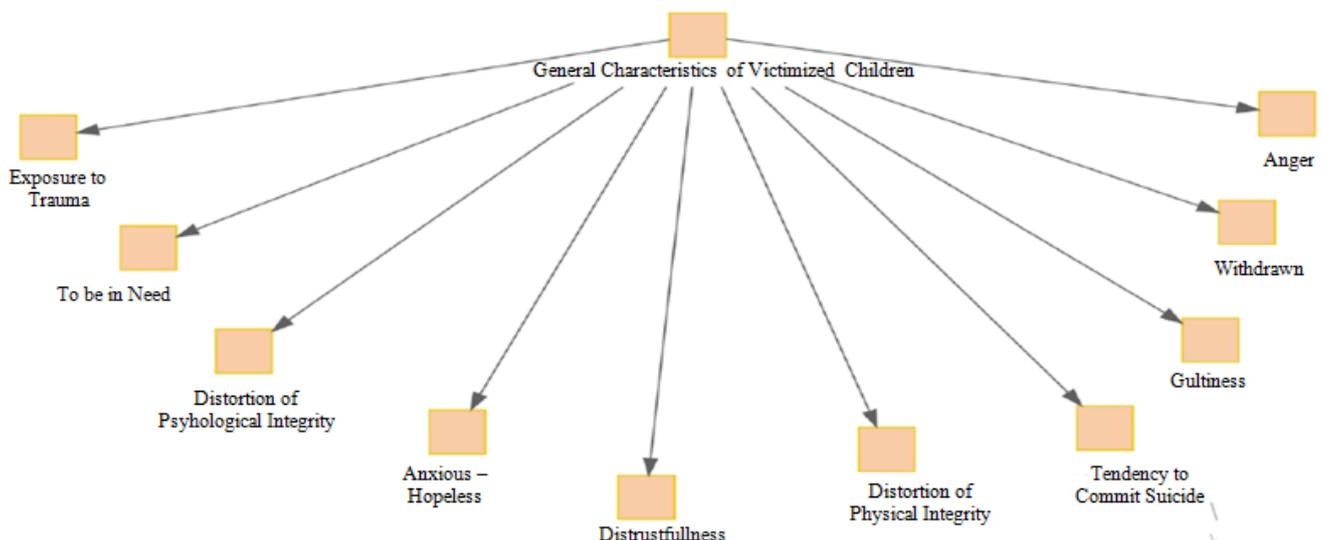


Figure 1. General Characteristics of Victimized Children

were prepared, and then the findings were interpreted by the researcher. Computer programs such as Maxqda offer advantages to the researcher in making the data analysis process more clear and systematic, controlling the process, reviewing the

There is trauma. Trauma, who needs help, definitely needs psychological support. ...I think that the people here should direct him somewhere, he should not be left alone (Karanfil, Professional Staff, 28).

A child in need of protection, that is, not adequately protected by his family, who should be protected by the

state, or at least an investigation should be made on this issue (Acrab, Judge, 63).

I mean, actually, any child, but of course, he has victimization and I think I can describe him as a child who needs more attention and help. I think that a child who has been exposed to anything should definitely be supported in some way (Kamelya, Professional Staff, 36).

Definition and Importance of Forensic Interview:

Participating judges and professional staff were asked to define the forensic interview according to themselves and their opinions about its place in the system. While more than half of the judges emphasized the idea that forensic interview was the process of collecting evidence, it was seen that the professional staff evaluated the issue as getting information from the child victim and ensuring justice. The most prominent among the responses of the participants were Information Retrieval Process and Helping the Victim Child.

One of the most emphasized issues by the most of the participating judges and professional staff regarding the definition of forensic interview is process of obtaining information. While more than half of the judges emphasized the idea that forensic interview was the process of collecting evidence, it was seen that the professional staff evaluated the issue as getting information from the child victim and ensuring justice. Shares of the participants are given below.

This is a job we do purely to obtain evidence, that is, whether the child is telling the truth, whether there is a contradiction, how much his statement will be respected, of course, we get help from the experts present at the hearing, we try to observe the child, we try to observe his reactions and we try to reach a conclusion because there is no other evidence fro these things, we are left alone with the victim (Almach, Judge, 46).

The process in which definition of the forensic interview with the child is reduced to the age and development of the child in a way that prevents secondary traumatization of the child and it is recorded that information about the incident is obtained from the child...(Kaktüs, Professional Staff, 40).

It is an interview to determine the required measures that should be taken and help the child. It is a very important in the justice system. AGO (Forensic interview room) has become for the benefits of children (Acrux, Judge, 50).

Child Statement: Participating judges and professionals were asked whether they saw a difference between the forensic interview with the child and the forensic interview with the adult. Opinions came to the for that children could access certain information more easily, or that they could come to the hearing with a script by hiding what

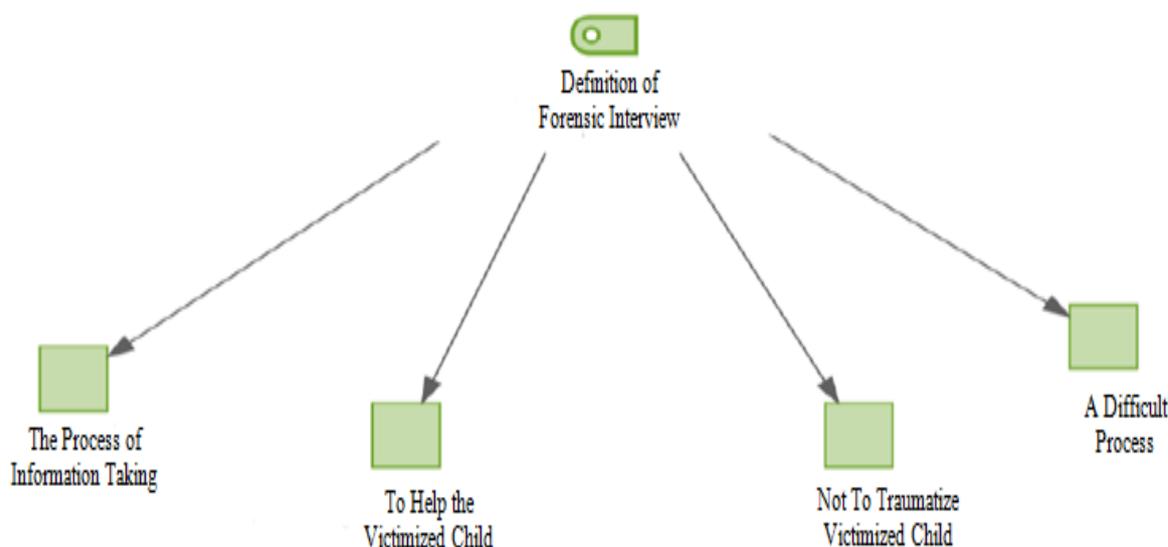


Figure 2. Definition of Forensic Interview

they had experienced, and that the young children narrated the event as it was.

...In the post-adolescent period, up to the age of 18, the child may be likely to lie for any reason. In other words, it can happen with family pressure, for example, in incest relationship, for example, the father can claim sexual abuse against his daughter, the mother may have pressure on the child, for example, from time to time, at least a question mark for us (Acrab, judge, 63).

As the child gets older, she learns some things by following them on social media, and she can come up

was definitely not enough...separately for each case..."disabled child", child with autism, that is, it would be better if there was a detailed drama education related to specific cases, yes I don't think it's enough in this respect (Çarkifelek, Professional Staff, 36).

The Assessment of Testimony of Children

In the training on Forensic Interview Rooms organized by the Ministry of Justice, participants expressed that the subject of interviewing children

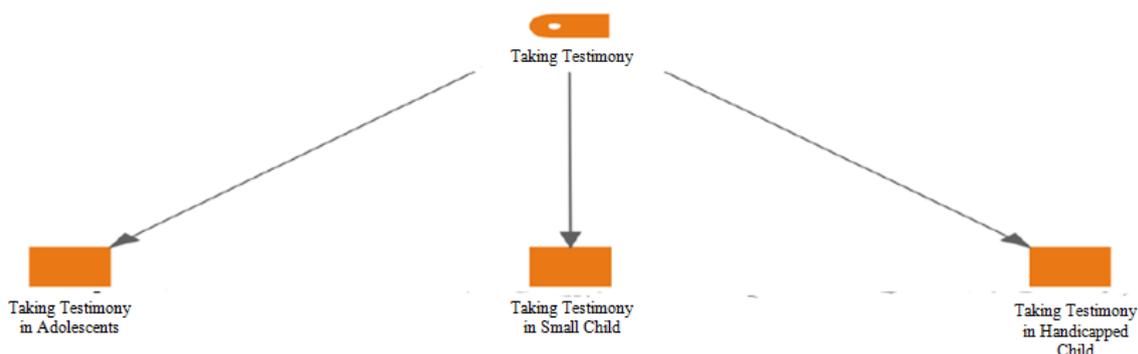


Figure 3. Taking Testimony

with a fiction...(Achird, judge, 49).

"..Now, of course, the child who is a victim of sexual abuse is now in such a situation that his psychological state, the huidance of his family, the guidance of the lawyer may be under pressure, he can tell about an event that did not happen, he can exaggerate, he can give the opposite statement. I am of the opinion that the sensitivity of the professional staff should also be at a very high level while taking the statements of the child and therefore the child here..." (Fesleğen, Professional Staff, 41).

"Personally, I can say about my own competence, I think that there is a serious knowledge and proficiency after the training we received, but of course that training

with disabilities was included. However, they stated that they did not find the training given to them sufficient.

In the research conducted; during the evaluation of the statement given by the child victim of sexual abuse, it was determined that the participating judges and professional staff mostly looked at the level of conformity of the child's statements with the material evidence, while the professional staff looked at the child's development level and the appropriateness and spontaneity of the expressions and whether they were in harmony.

Another question asked to the participants regarding the child's expression is what is

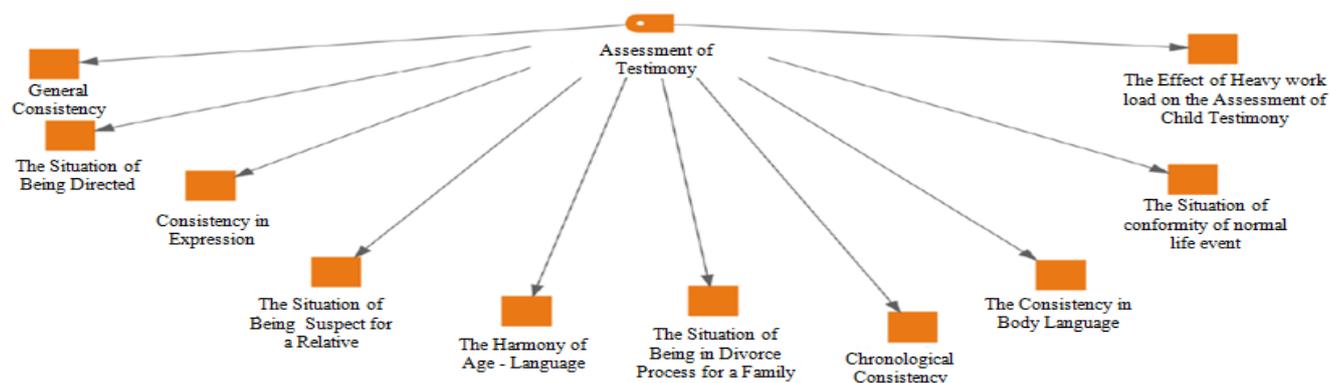


Figure 4. Assesment of Testimony

considered in the evaluation of the child's expression. The issue most frequently expressed by the participants was whether there was general consistency and misdirection.

Most of the participating judges and professionals stated that the most important factor when evaluating the interview with the child victims in the forensic interview room is general consistency. Participants stated that they looked at issues such as whether the child's statements matched with the material evidence, whether their narrative was stable, whether they told the events within the framework of time and space orientation, and whether they made eye contact. The statements of the participants are as follows.

I look at the general suitability, whether the child's description and the material findings match, whether it is in accordance with the doctor's report. You give the man a 10-year prison sentence with a statement given by the child, and there are problems in the execution process. With the child's statement, an innocent person can go to jail, a rapist can be released (Alcor, Judge, 58).

".. Whether the victim conveys the events with integrity while describing his gestures and mimics in what we call social heredity characteristics, whether he especially makes eye contact while expressing himself...Does he tell the events in terms of time and place orientation, one of the issues we pay attention to. Can he give details about the event while expressing himself, for example, we did this that day, but I wore black shoes, I had a yellow coat, if he can give such details, I can say that it affects us positively in terms of reliability (Çarkıfelek, Professional Staff, 36).

In the evaluation of the testimony given by the child victim of sexual abuse by the participating judges and professional staff, the judges mostly look at the level of conformity of the child's statements with the material evidence, on the other hand, it was seen that the professional staff looked at the child's development level and the appropriateness and spontaneity of her expressions and evaluated whether they were in harmony.

When evaluating the expression of the child who was the victim of sexual abuse, one of the issues that is mostly taken into consideration is whether the child is directed or not. Participants' opinions on the subject are as follows.

...During the interview with child the most important thing is whether she tells us the truth, if she is hiding something from us, whether she is under pressure of her family, being directed or not... (Almach, Judge, 46).

Now, of course, the child who is a victim of sexual abuse can tell about an event as if it didn't happen, exaggerate, and give the opposite statement...."(Fesleğen, Professional Staff, 41).

Participants particularly referring to incest cases, they stated that they paid attention to issues such as whether children looked at parents during the interview, whether they were exposed to pressure and whether they are affected by their families or not.

It is considered that, the victim's complaint must be submitted from the moment it is transmitted to the police station to the court as short as possible. It is thought that spending less time in police station and start the trial in a short time would be useful to protect children from being misdirected by their parents.

Differences Between Child and Adult Victims:

Another question asked to the participants within the scope of the research was about the differences between child and adult victims. The issues most frequently expressed by the participants in this regard were being more sensitive to child victims and the fear and possible effects of child victims. Most of the participants stated that they pay attention to the language they use when communicating with the child victim, they use a language that does not distress the child, and they act sensitively. The statements of the participants on the subject are presented below.

"There is a difference, we are kinder to children, we take care, we take statements using literature. We try to speak in a language that the child can understand and that will not put the child in trouble. In our interview with the adult, there are more comfortable and clearer determinations. We also direct our questions to the adult (Aladfar, Judge, 50).

"I think we need to be more sensitive, because I don't know at the moment what age you are talking about in the age range you call a child, but when you talk about sexual abuse in children at a young age, you can't ask your questions like an adult, that is, how much the child can come to you, sometimes you get blocked, that's all,

you can approach the child (Gülgoncasti, Professional Staff, 27).

The child is afraid during the forensic interview, so we approach her with caution, we look at her if there is any other evidence ... (Alchiba, Judge, 50).

There is also the fear part of the job, that is, you are trying to ensure that information is received from the child in an environment where he is not safe. Unless you make the child feel safe, it is not possible to receive information or healthy information... (Erguvan, Professional Staff, 25).

From the statements of the participants, the impression was obtained that they paid attention to be in an appropriate attitude and behavior to the age and situation of the child in the interview they made with the sexually abused child, and that they start to meet with the child by establishing rapport. It was found meaningful in terms of child-friendly policies.

Forensic Interview Training with Child Victim:

In this section, it was examined that whether judges and professional staff (Social worker, psychologists etc.) who work in courthouses attended forensic interview training of sexually abused children or not.

Five of the 18 judges (27.78%) and 23 (92%) of the 25 professionals who participated in the research stated that they had attended a training on forensic interviewing with a child who was a victim of sexual abuse in the past. Participants who stated that they attended the training organized by the Ministry of Justice in the past said that the trainings took place between 2 and 7 days. It is noteworthy that only 5 of the 18 judges interviewed had participated in forensic interview training with the child victim in the past. It has been determined that the judges who have participated in the forensic interview training have a higher interest in the subject and are in favor of the use of forensic interview rooms.

Participants who participated in the training on Forensic Interview Rooms by the Ministry of Justice expressed the titles of Forensic Interview Rooms and Stages, Interview Techniques with the Victim Child, Psycho-Drama Practices, Developmental Characteristics of the Child, and Theoretical and Technical Information on the content of the training.

Participants stated that they received training on interview techniques related to the Forensic Interview Rooms training organized by the Ministry of Justice, and they were informed about which methods would facilitate the interview with the child and how to communicate with the child. Some of the participants' thoughts on the subject are given below.

"I attended a 3-4 day training of the Ministry of Justice. It was quite sufficient, we also practiced in the practical training of a child in the forensic interview room, and we participated in the practical training of a child in the forensic interview room, I think it was a very sufficient training" (Acrab, Judge, 63).

"...After giving information about what we can use in interview techniques, what can help children's expression more, what information should be given to the child before entering the interview room, what can be done, what will help the child not to be abused it was actually a training in which we were directed to some brief summary techniques and to be informed and to improve our skills within the process (Erezya, Professional Staff, 40).

Participants stated that they found the practices in the training they attended on forensic interview rooms insufficient, that the cases that were applied were chosen from easy ones, that they could not come across any problematic sample cases, and that practice-based training should be provided. The statements of the participants are as follows

"No it wasn't enough. I mean, it's super blind. In fact, the information we know, that is, it is a bit like a repetition of the same things in our undergraduate or later trainings, but we feel that we are very inadequate in terms of practice. For example, in the last training, a book was prepared on the subject of...examples were given, but we received a booklet of the trainings there, based on 4-5 cases, but the cases went so smoothly. The child came and continued easily and finished. It's not like a troubling example... (Kamelya, professional staff, 36).

Not To Attend The Training and Its Effects

Another issue that the participants who attended the training on forensic interview rooms put forward regarding the training is that the training is unplanned. The opinions of the participants on the subject are given below.

It wasn't enough for me because I think it requires serious preparation, because, the information we acquired developmentally was the information we knew from the university, somehow we got and familiar with, you know, with minor differences, but for a 5 days it would settle in our head, digest it, and say, "It's like a they inserted a chip, did the installation, and left it". This information is both sitting in the brain and synthesizing in such a short time. It is not something that can be internalized in a such a way that it can be put into practice, and we will also need to get psychological support from time to time for this, because how to communicate with these children, how to approach a child who is highly traumatized, that is, how to approach them in more detail and I did not find it sufficient because it had to be endured for a longer period (Frezya, Professional Staff, 40).

Some participants complained about the inadequacy of the training period and stated that the training should be longer. The opinions of some participants regarding this are as follows

"I mean, it wasn't enough in terms of time, I don't remember exactly, but I think it was only once, that role-play work was only once, for example, it could have been more..."(Çalba, Professional Staff, 32).

In the interviews with the participants, it was determined that 13 out of 18 judges (72,22%) and 2 out of 25 professional staff (8%) did not attend the training on Forensic Interview Rooms. The title of Not To Get Training was evaluated under two headings: the reasons for not receiving education and the effects of not receiving education.

During the interviews with the judges who participated in the research, it was not clear why most of the judges did not attend the training at the time of the training. However, since it is known that the target audience of the 3-day Forensic Interview training conducted by the Ministry of Justice with the support of UNICEF in 2017 and 2018 for judges and prosecutors is 500 judges and prosecutors working in courthouses with AGO (Peker, 2018), it is considered that this quota is the barrier for reaching out more participants. The reasons for not participating in the training of the professional staff were to be in army service and being on maternity leave. The answers of the professionals on the subject are as follows

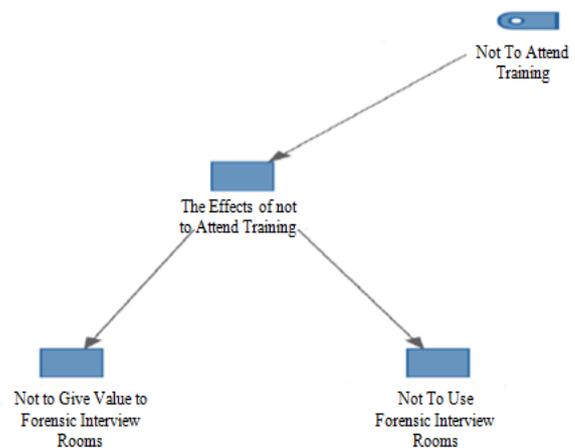
It was determined that some of the participants especially the professional staff, could not attend the training because they were in military service or were on maternity leave. Share of the participants regarding this issue are given below.

No I didn't get the training, I was in military service, therefore I couldn't attend it (Begonvil, Professional staff, 25)

I did not take. I was on maternity leave, that is, I was on unpaid leave to look after children (Begonia, Professional Staff, 26).

Data on not participating in the training and it's effects are given below.

Figure 5. Not To Attend Training and Its Effects



13 out of 18 judges (72,22%) and 2 out of 25 professional staff (8%) declared that they did not attend the training on Forensic Interview Rooms. It has been observed that the professionals who did not have the opportunity to participate in the training but had a forensic interview with the child had positive thoughts about the application of forensic interview rooms. However, it was observed that some judges who did not attend the training did not use the Forensic Interview Rooms and did not care about this new practice. The effects of not receiving training were evaluated under two headings: not using the forensic interview rooms and not paying attention to the forensic interview rooms. Some of the participants' statements are as follows.

In the interviews with the judges who did not attend the forensic interview rooms training, it was determined that more than half of the judges who did not undergo the training did not use the

forensic interview rooms. Some of the judges' shares on the subject are presented below.

Now, the reason I didn't use it was because our colleagues used it a few times, there were complaints that there was a problem with the sound, that the contact could not be established properly, so that the heat of that child was not as good as the conversation we had with him, we did not use it until today, it may be if the problem is solved, but I am a supporter of the thing, so one to one. If necessary, there may be an environment where the court committee can go there, I don't know exactly how, this is not possible under today's conditions, I am in favor of the court committee making contact with the naked eye (Almach, Judge, 46).

Another prominent issue in the interviews with the judges who did not attend the training on forensic interview rooms was that the judges did not care about the forensic interview rooms. The opinions of the participants on the subject are as follows

The court should be able to touch the evidence, the AGO practice is against the "face to face principle"... I do not have a conscientious opinion on the camera screen. Let the doctor examine you in a camera environment, not in the hospital, and prescribe you medicine, do not go to the hospital, will you? I think this is a fiasco. 2 amateur police, a sociologist, social worker, an interview with 35 years in prison? I cannot base my decision on assumptions. The punishment you give to the person is not only imprisonment, it also destroys the reputation of the man...(Aladfar, Judge, 50).

Conclusion

Professional staff (social worker, psychologists) and judges who make contact with children victim of sexual abuse emphasized "trauma, need for help, deterioration in psychological and physical integrity and anxiety" when they were asked to define characteristics of children. It is thought that this situation emphasizes how much the children who are victims of sexual abuse need social support and the need to focus not only on the purpose of collecting information and reaching evidence, but also on the needs of the children in the forensic interviews to be made with them. The participants' definitions are compatible with the literature knowledge. The severity of the trauma experienced by children who are victims of sexual

abuse increases, especially if the attacker is a family member and the abuse lasts for a long time (Tower, 1999). One of the psychological problems that is likely to be seen in children who are victims of abuse often experience anxiety about the future (Polat, 2014).

It was also observed that there were differences in the views of the participants about taking statements from the young child. Professional staff stated that they mostly evaluate the expressions of young children based on consistency, not on right or wrong and generally find themselves sincere. Among the judges, opinions were expressed that the younger children had difficulty in expressing the concepts of time and space and that they could not express themselves. The phenomenon of consistency was mentioned by both professionals and judges in the evaluation of forensic interviews with the child. The consistency of the victim's statement plays an important role, especially in the decisions taken by judges (Gedik, 2019). Polat (2019) said that the most important issue in abuse cases is to obtain the abuse history from the child accurately.

The participants see the Forensic Interview as an important tool for the process of obtaining information about the incident, helping the child who is the victim of abuse. Children contribute to the provision of justice through forensic interviews, the judges see the forensic interview from the perspective of obtaining evidence, and the professional staff from the eye of helping the child. Although there is sharing from the participants about it, it is believed that it should be underlined that forensic interview is a form of interview that requires good education and professionalism. Forensic interviews are extremely important for catching the perpetrator in cases of sexual abuse. Because the answer to what happened in abuse cases and who did it is being investigated (Milne & Bull, 2006; Milne & Powell, 2010). The victim's statement is the most important evidence of the investigation (Korkman, Pakkanen & Laajasalo, 2017). The goal of a forensic interview is to present valid and secure information to the court (Andrews & Lamb, 2014).

Participating judges and professionals regarding the taking of the child's statement evaluated the issue within the framework of taking

statements from adolescent children, young children and disabled children. It was particularly striking that nearly half of the judges interviewed stated that they approached the adolescent's expression with suspicion. Judges with regard to adolescent children; they stated that adolescent children used the information they obtained on the internet, that they could express a union of their own accord as if it was forced due to social pressure, and that they could make false statements in families that were in the process of divorce. If the family member is abusing them, children may hesitate to give information to protect them or may deny the abuse (Orbach & Shiolach, 2007). Adolescent children's lying behaviour is linked to the characteristics of adolescence. An adolescent child may lie to cope with a bad event or to avoid punishment (Barsukova, 2012). Children may lie to hide the abuse (Alpaslan, 2014).

The researchers determined that very few of the judges he interviewed had books and articles in his room on the subject of forensic interview with the child. In addition, the fact that less than half (5 out of 18 judges) attended the training organized by the Ministry of Justice for the Forensic Interview Rooms is thought to cause the judges to be deprived of information on how to solve the difficulties they face in communicating with children. The success of a forensic interview with a child depends significantly on a qualified forensic interviewer, a study conducted in London confirms this (London, 2008). Conducting forensic interviews is considered an important skill (Dando & Milne, 2009). Children are reluctant to talk about a traumatic event such as sexual abuse with someone who does not have sufficient knowledge about it (Orbach & Shiolach, 2007). Forensic interviewers must have the necessary skills to connect with the child and ask questions (Stewart, Katz & La Rooy, 2011). This situation shows that one of the most basic skills that forensic interviewer must have is communication with child.

Policy Recommendations

Suggestions for forensic interviewing with children who are victims of sexual abuse are presented below.

i) Preventing children who are victims of sexual abuse from being called for legal interviews more than once

ii) Taking necessary security measures to protect the child from the possible threats and violence of the accused and the relatives of the accused in the courthouse

iii) If the child who is victim of incest give up his/her complaint a social case reported must be prepared as soon as possible and examine the reason for that

iv) Regular training and supervision should be given to forensic interviewers, judges, public prosecutors and lawyers

v) Forensic interview protocol should be prepared and put into practice as soon as possible

vi) It is believed that it would be appropriate to visit the schools of children who are victims of sexual abuse by professional staff (Social worker, psychologists etc.)

It is thought that the scope of future researchers should not be limited to only one province, should cover a much wider number of participants, and that public prosecutors and lawyers should be included in the research. In addition, it is believed that it would be appropriate to evaluate the performance of forensic interviewers by examining the recorded interviews carried out with children victim of sexual abuse

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