

Addressing the complexity of HETEROGENEITY: Profile of ADOLESCENT GIRLS who have been SEXUALLY ABUSED

Childhood sexual abuse affects both boys and girls. It has long term and short term affects including social problems, anxiety, depression, maladaptive sexual development and so much more. There is yet a study that considers heterogeneity amongst the affects of CSA. The presented study aims to enhance the understanding of heterogeneity and profiles among adolescent girls who have been sexually abused.

Childhood abuse affects 1 in 5 females and 1 in 13 males world wide.



It's during adolescence that we find the highest prevalence of sexually assaulted girls, depending on the study, this prevalence can be as high as 50%.

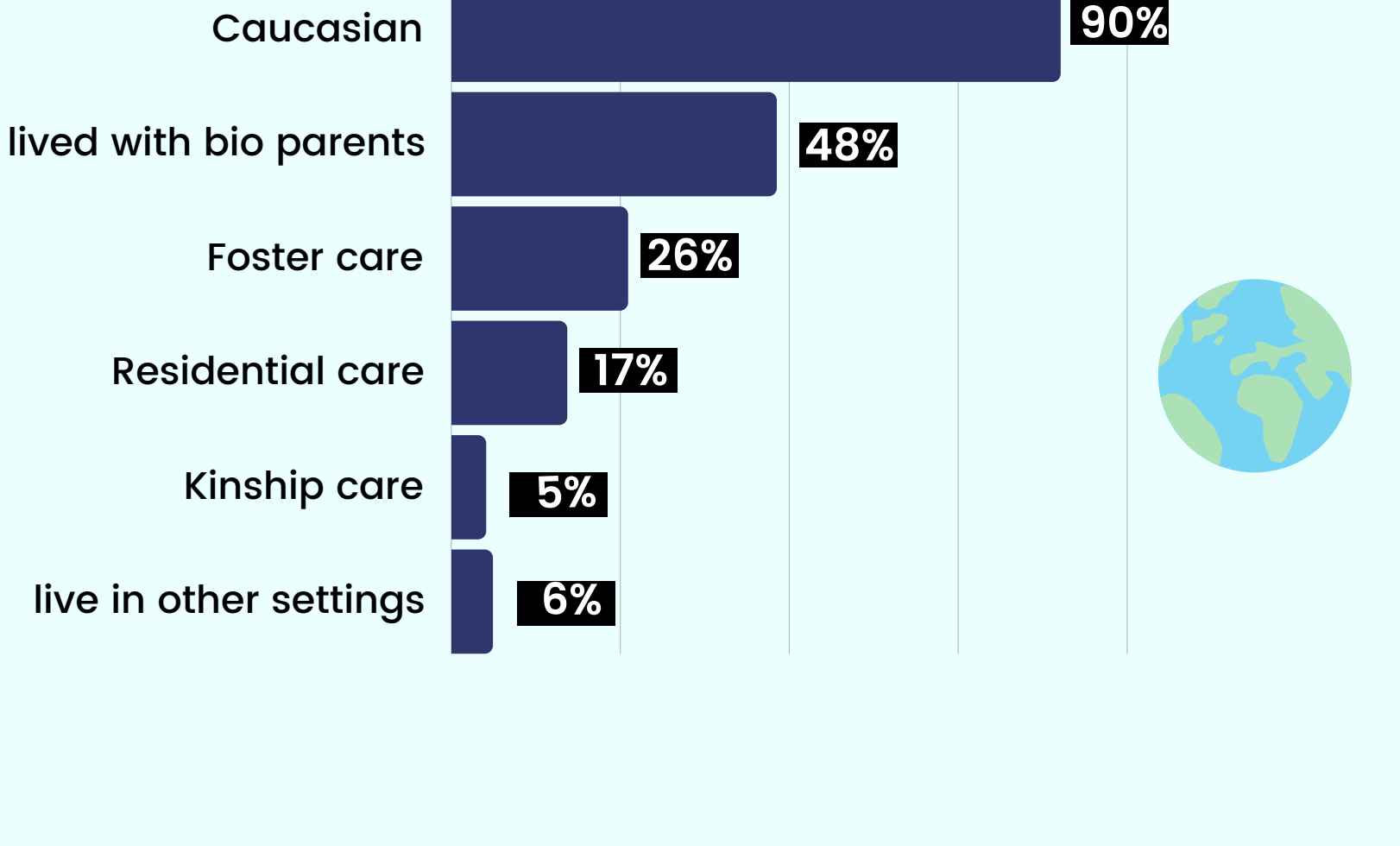


Context

A sample drawn from 185 adolescent girls (11 to 17 years old) in child protective services who have been sexually abused with contact.

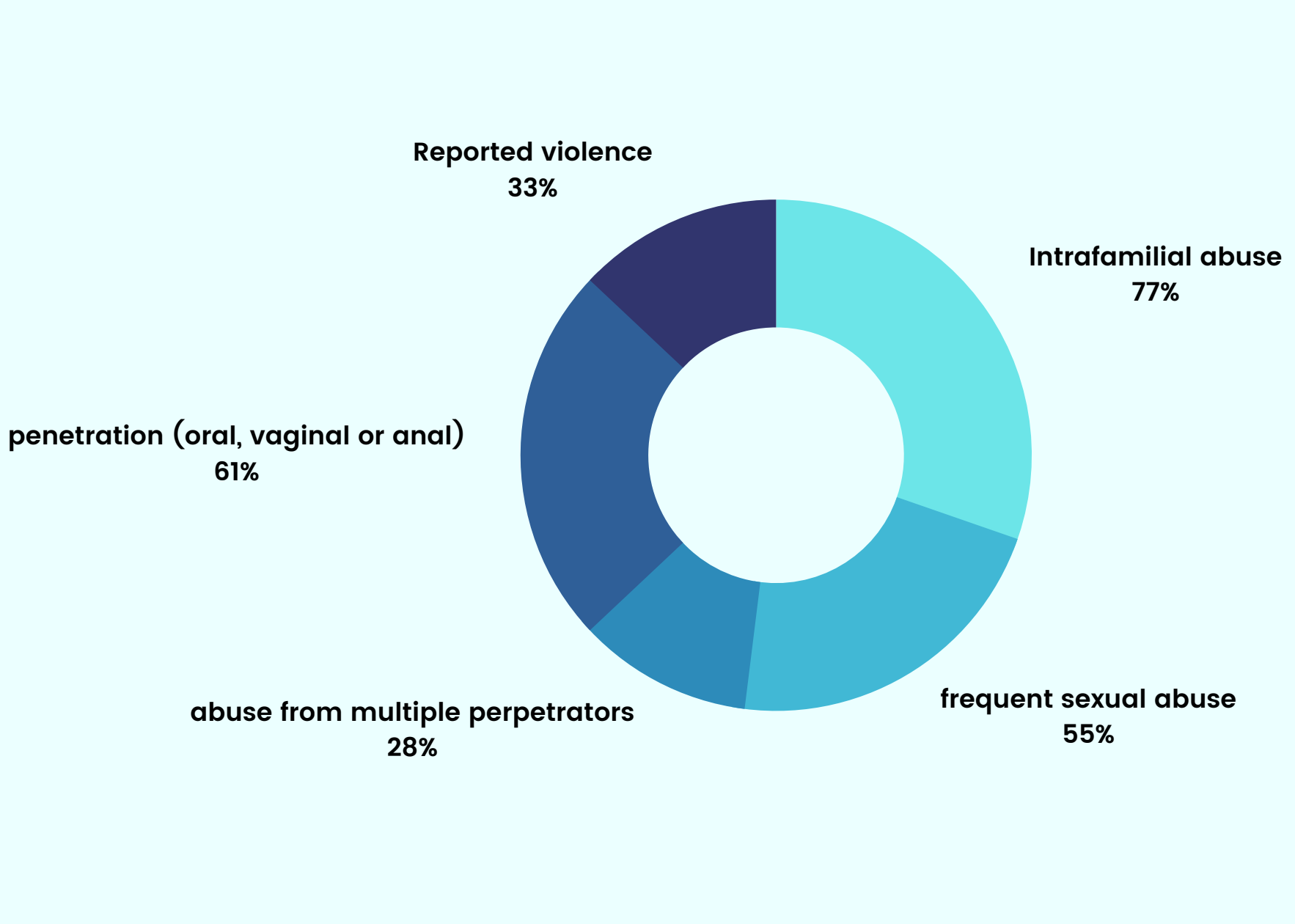
Abuse and stressful events were measured using a rating scale and a self reported questionnaire. A latent class analysis was conducted using abuse and stress indicators and multinomial logistic regression analyses were used to compare classes on outcomes.

Participants background

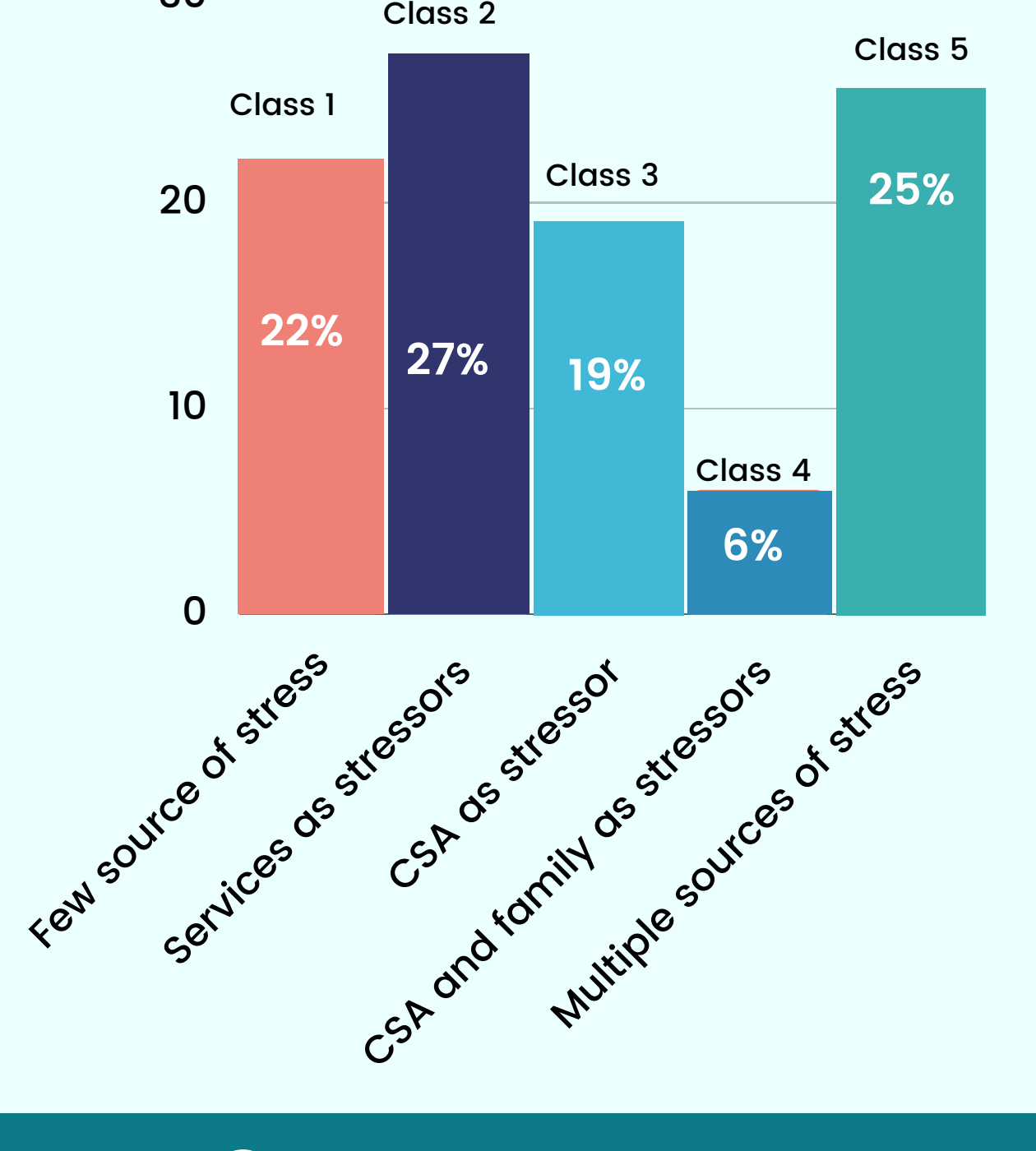


Results

Latent class analysis performed using latent Gold 4 to identify subgroups of adolescents from abuse stress indicators based on Spaccarelli's model.



Five graded classes were identified and associated with distinct profiles



Consequences

Class 1:
Class with few sources of stress did better than other classes, but they still need clinical attention as they may have higher psychological symptoms than non-victims.

Class 2
In class 2: services intended to protect adolescents (placement) and society (police and court room) were sources of stress and even possibly re-tramatization.

Class 3
Adolescents in class 3 who had CSA as a stressor had elevated sexual concerns (being confused about your sexual feelings) which may be indicative of maladaptive sexual development.

Class 4 and 5
Adolescents in class 4 who were mostly assaulted by multiple perpetrators and who reported having the highest number of violent family events, had higher PTSD symptoms than adolescents in class 5 who had multiple sources of stress.

Recommendations

- Highlight the importance of addressing the youth profile before going forward with clinical interventions, to move beyond the "one size fits all" approach.
- Clinical interventions can be delivered within a trauma informed care system that recognizes not only the prevalence and impact of CSA and other stressful experiences amongst adolescent girls, but also opportunities for recovery and resilience in the aftermath of trauma.