

Abused children: Psychotherapist from Behind the Screen: The case study of Incest in the Arab sector in Israel

Yasmine Yehia, Girne American University (GAU)

Co-writer: Assoc. Dr. Aysin Sinal, Girne American University (GAU)

Abstract

We know that child sexual abuse (CSA) and incest does not occur in isolation, but often in conjunction with emotional and physical abuse, neglect, and domestic violence within the family (Tener, et al., 2021). The more types of child maltreatment experienced, the greater the negative impact on abused children mental health. The family situation greatly affects the mother's ability to respond positively toward the disclosure of CSA. A recent cluster analysis of 35 psychotherapists from behind the screen in Israel in dealing with incest in the Arab sector has been discussed in this study. This study used a qualitative methodology based on interviews with 35 psychotherapists who work from behind the screen with sexually abused children based on the case study of incest in the Arab region. Interviews were utilized to gather qualitative information regarding the abuse in the Arab sector in Israel. These abused Arab youngsters had undergone counselling and psychological treatment before the interviews. The last themes that emerged were: characteristics of the therapist that support behind the screen therapeutic connection, narrative therapy, turning points, and counsel for therapists working with abused children in the Arab sector in Israel. The factor that affected the participants the most was confidence in the therapeutic alliance based on precise boundaries between the therapist and the abused child presented themes offered helpful therapeutic ideas and tactics that aided in speeding up the healing process.

Keywords: *child abuse, emotional child abuse, overcoming from child abuse, narrative method, case study, incest, Arab sector, Psychotherapist, Therapy from behind the screen, sexual abuse disclosure, family*

1. Introduction:

Incest is categorized to be a form of sexual abuse that contributes to the establishment of a sexual relationship between a man or a woman, a woman and woman, and a man and man that are more likely to be subjected as close relatives. This sexual relationship is legally, ethically, and morally forbidden from marriage. The category of sexual abuse is also regarded as a blood type that can lead to the development of a sexual relationship between a brother and a sister, a father and a daughter, and a mother and her son (Bergelson, 2018). The prevalence of this sexual abuse contributes to causing multiple harmful effects, including physical, sexual, and psychological challenges to the victims. It also leads to cause multiple harmful effects, including marital difficulties and increased risks of physical and emotional abuse of children (Gunduz, Karbeyaz & Aryanci, 2011).

This incest delivers closeness within a relationship in a family that lacks proper nurture and affection. The impact of such a relationship negatively influences families and children and demands a psychotherapist's involvement to pay some attention to it (McElroy, Shevlin & Murphy, 2016). The inference from the report of Haaretz (2015) dictated that the prevalence of incest cases varies between 4 to 52% in different geographical locations. The empirical research has also dictated that it has pertained to a sexual relationship that involves fathers molesting their children. However, most of their psychotherapists also dictated that the brothers towards the victims usually practice this molesting behavior. This issue has been significantly increasing along with other forms of sexual abuse; however, it still a lack of awareness regarding the problem (Abu-Baker, 2013).

Many of the theoretical and contextual perspectives can be utilized to describe the practice of incest and to develop its understanding. From a contextual perspective, the incest phenomenon can be better understood based on the larger social and familial context. Different levels of context can impact the problem (Hornle, 2014). Many of the factors do have an impact on the development of these related processes. Some of these factors include cultural aspects, the presence of their existing relationship process, and gender. Gender roles also significantly impact license social context within the cultural system to respond to the increased incest issue. Also, this experience of sexual abuse highly depends on the multifaceted context and its variance from one cultural setting to another (Radford, Allnock, & Shorrock, 2020).

Moreover, sexual violence against minors can contribute to causing both short-term and long-term implications for the victims. Within the Arab society in Israel, some factors that impact sexual practices within Israel include cultural gender values, religious values, and the adoption of different traditional Arab practices (Trepper & Barrett, 2013). The hesitation of the Arab education system to introduce sexual violence within elementary schools is another factor that contributes to causing sexual violence (Al Saideen et al., 2022).

Along with the growing body of research and evidence, the prevalence of incest has also been increasing, causing harmful impacts on the victims. It implies that clinicians introduce different interventions and effective treatment strategies for offenders and victims to deal with the incestuous sibling relation dynamics. Traditionally, it was categorized as a benign aspect within the developmental play that should not be dismissed by the caretakers and professionals (Ajzenstadt & Cavaglion, 2005).

Here in this context, the clinicians are subjected to play the key role in addressing this issue and dealing with the emotional burdens that occurred due to incest. The long-term and devastating short-term impacts on the victims cause multiple psychological effects along with the prevalence of different traumatic issues for the victims. This psychological trauma also impacts broken families and causes debilitating symptoms (Koçturk & Yuksel, 2019). The empirical literature has also dictated that practicing incest is more likely to occur between siblings than parent-child incest. Also, sibling incest leads to cause a serious negative impact on the victims that require greater attention to prevent any other form of sexual abuse (Ballantine, 2012).

Many variations are present between the sibling abuse dynamics that lead to cause multiple issues and challenges for the professionals who treat those victims, families, and sibling offenders. Also, due to the lack of awareness and different cultural contexts, sibling incest is relatively difficult to identify and is usually under-reported. In these cultural contexts, especially within Arab Israel, the families are not subjected to disclose sibling incest due to different cultural and social factors. They also prefer to uncover this form of sexual abuse during therapeutic relationships when the victims seek clinical assistance (Bentovim et al., 2018).

Moreover, as per the traditions and historical values of sibling incest, most individuals believe it is a normal part of childhood sexual development and does not cross any form of cross generational boundaries. Many tactics and the usage of power are involved within incestuous. These tactics include using power and other forms of coercion, including threats, force, trickery, and bribes (Bittles, 2015).

The empirical evidence has widely dictated that sibling incest does have delirious impacts on the victims. It can also occur for a longer time, causing severe forms of sexual abuse, including penetration. It might also include youthful sex offenders or sexually abusive fathers (Quarshie et al., 2017). The background of incest has also dictated that this issue is more likely to occur within dysfunctional families that are usually large and focus on embracing traditional Patriarchal values. Mostly, these families are characterized as emotionally volatile, chaotic, and physically and emotionally violent. It also contributes to causing a significantly higher risk of incidents that can lead to cause marital discord (Aydin et al., 2015).

Moreover, these sibling incest families usually have open and broad boundaries due to the presence of blurred internal boundaries between different members that can lead to cause role confusion as well as the development of inappropriate sexualized role models. All these factors do have an impact on causing incest. Psychotherapists play a major role in assisting these abused children with Arab Israel (David, 2018).

Based on the psychological and clinical perspective, it has also been indicated that some of the social workers due to which this abusive behavior is commonly addressed within Arab Israeli children include the absence of parents at home because of their busy schedule at the workplace and the presence of other conditions like mental illness, substance abuse, and different debilitating conditions (Gunduz et al., 2011).

All the above-described factors are one of the leading reasons why parental supervision is nonexistent within Arab Israel families. The patient's emotional and physical absence leads to enhanced power, status, and responsibility among the older siblings. This is how the older siblings can utilize their power to practice child abuse, known as incest (Herman, 2013).

Based on the above-described context, it has also been dictated that the frequency of child maltreatment has been widely increasing on a large scale due to the presence of different social problems and the involvement of children, their families, and society (Yates, 2013) All these factors do have a major impact on negatively impacting the children. Most of the social and environmental factors also contribute to letting them

practice sexual behavior. Although, many of the efforts are considered to provide these children with basic services and involve clinical and forensic interventions (Katz et al., 2022).

The increased child maltreatment and other factors contribute to causing an increase in the sexual abuse known as incest within Israel. Most Muslim women associated with Arab Israel are more likely to suffer from sexual abuse due to different factors associated with the Israeli system. The differences between Israeli culture and Western societies and other cultural and political factors cause an increased prevalence of incest (Rakovec-Felser & Vidovic, 2016).

The cultural context of Israeli Arab society has dictated that it is largely characterized due to the presence of traditional collectivist orientation and different values of harmony, considering reputation within the family, social cohesion, and satisfying the needs of others at both the social and family levels. These characteristics greatly impact the development of a challenging cross-cultural encounter with the Jewish majority within the country. These encounters contribute to causing multiple social changes within society and the division of roles within the family (McElroy et al., 2016).

Based on the above-described cultural context, one of the significant manifestations that are involved in the social change in Arab society within Israel associates with the status of adolescents and children. This social system and the traditional structure devalue the children's identity based on their feelings and desires (Celbis et al., 2020). Other than this, the parent-child relationship within Arab Israel is also characterized as dominant and submissive. The emergence of this dominant and submissive relationship between children and parents is one of the major factors that contribute to threatening the child. The same is the case in the sibling relationship in which the older siblings are characterized as dominant while, the younger ones are submissive. This dominant-submissive relationship is one of the key reasons why an increased prevalence of incest has been addressed (Misra, 2011).

Other than the social and cultural abandonment, parents of Arab Israeli families also highly contribute, causing an increased incidence of sibling incest, in the presence of

extramarital affairs, and parental infidelity results in family abandonment. This scenario explains that sibling incest is the efforts of children to compensate for emotional deprivation and increase the chances of emotional attachments to decrease the risk of family disintegration (Olufunke, 2018).

Generally discussing, despite the Arab Israel nation, others nations also have an increased prevalence of incest based on psychological, cultural, and family factors. All these three factors are quite common and highly contribute to increasing the chances of incest. The occurrence of incest involves the presence of a closely guarded family secret. This increased occurrence of incest demands a focus on child abuse prevention strategies, due to which physicians and psychotherapists play an important role in dealing with this issue (Suyanto et al., 2019)

This issue is not subjected to be discussed openly because of its association with societal taboos within Arab Israel. Within Arab Israel, incest is becoming a sinful and illegitimate relationship between non-married persons. It is categorized as a serious sin within Islam, Israel's Middle East, and the Palestinian population. Islamic law has also dictated that these sinners are publicly punished for their sexual acts. Another aspect associated with Arab families is that they are sensitive to *fadiha*. It suggests that they fear the scandal that can result in causing damage to their reputation within society. This context is defined by the fact that these other families are subjected to hiding these kinds of scandals, especially incest. This fear is also augmented due to the involvement of a dominant external locus that can influence the collective norms (Rasmussen, 2013).

Moreover, their abusive parents also tend to hide these sorts of abuses from the family to maintain their reputation. In such a relationship, the victims usually fail to seek outside support, and the abusive parents usually consider managing their public image. Within the traditional Arab communities, these sorts of sexual relationships are also categorised to be as highly harmful to their honour, impacting the images of the families (McKinnon, 2015). The cultural conceptions of the Arabs also involve that most families prefer to go for honour killing to maintain their reputation. All these Arab norms are

associated with different sectors of Middle East Arab society that do have a significant influence on incest, as per the claim of Schetky and Green (2014).

All the above-described conceptions and perspectives have a major impact on muting the professional discourse to deal with incest in Arab society. But along with the advancement of time and globalisation, information has started to emerge all over the Internet due to the increased awareness of addressing the issues associated with incest (Yusof et al., 2015).

Many factors are associated with the prevalence of incest, and the abusers considered the involvement of different strategies to practice this unethical and illegal conduct.

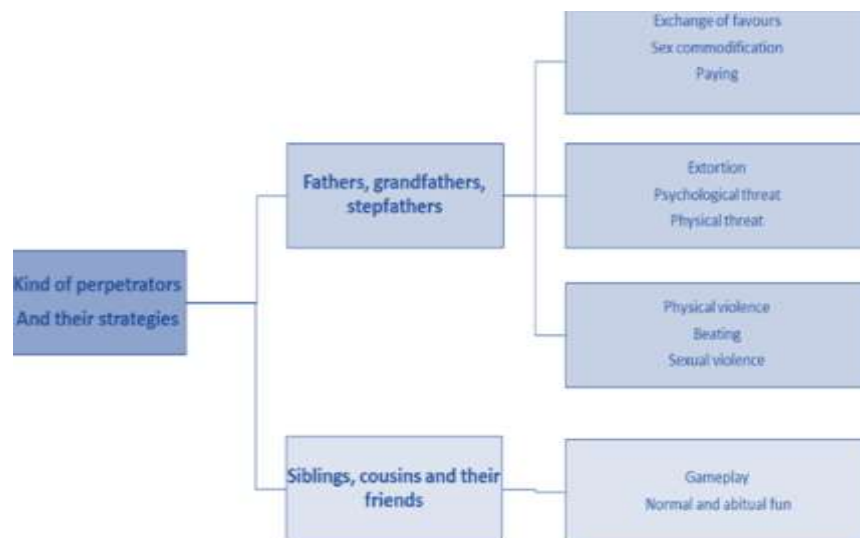


Figure 1: Different kinds of refrigerators and their strategies

The above figure presents different kinds of refrigerators and their strategies. The type of preparators that are usually involved in practising incest includes fathers, grandfathers, stepfathers, siblings, cousins, and their friends. These perpetrators consider different strategies to practice sexual violence against the victims (Ambrosio, 2018). The three major strategies usually considered in its list by the fathers or grand or stepfathers include the exchange of favours, paying, sex commodification, extortion, physical and psychological threat, and sexual violence. At the same time, incest among siblings,

cousins, and friends is based on the consideration of gameplay and normal and habitual fun (Radford et al., 2020).

Among all the above-described factors, physical aggression, credibility, and violence are among the most emerging factors, along with the prevalence of torture. All these dynamics also contribute to increasing the prevalence of sexual relationships between family members. Different sorts of incestuous relationships have different bases and factors that impact them (Selvius et al., 2018). Throughout history, there have been different forms of intimacy within the family setting that usually leads to cause the emergence of sexual violence. Although the government has set different rules and the involvement of different clinical experts to deal with this sort of traumatic effect still, most individuals do not prefer to discuss this issue with legal and professional bodies (Bilginer et al., 2013).

Also, the government has been focusing on the control and prevention of incest practice, But still, it has been dictated to me as an emerging issue. In most of their cases, the preparators are usually reported male adults, and the victims are young female girls. This issue has been underestimated in most societies. Besides this, one of the most commonly involved factors is the involvement of distributed family relationships. The presence of distributed family relationships contributes to shifting the individual responsibilities and expectations among the siblings, which can lead to cause incest (Sigad & Tener, 2022)

The practice of this sexual violence demands the consideration of a psychotherapist to deal with the traumatic events. They also face future characterisation, including a lack of self-esteem, impaired interpersonal relationships, and post-traumatic stress disorder. It also imposes the psychotherapist to involve different strategies, including family and individual therapy, to deal with these problems and to incorporate appropriate strategies to address them.

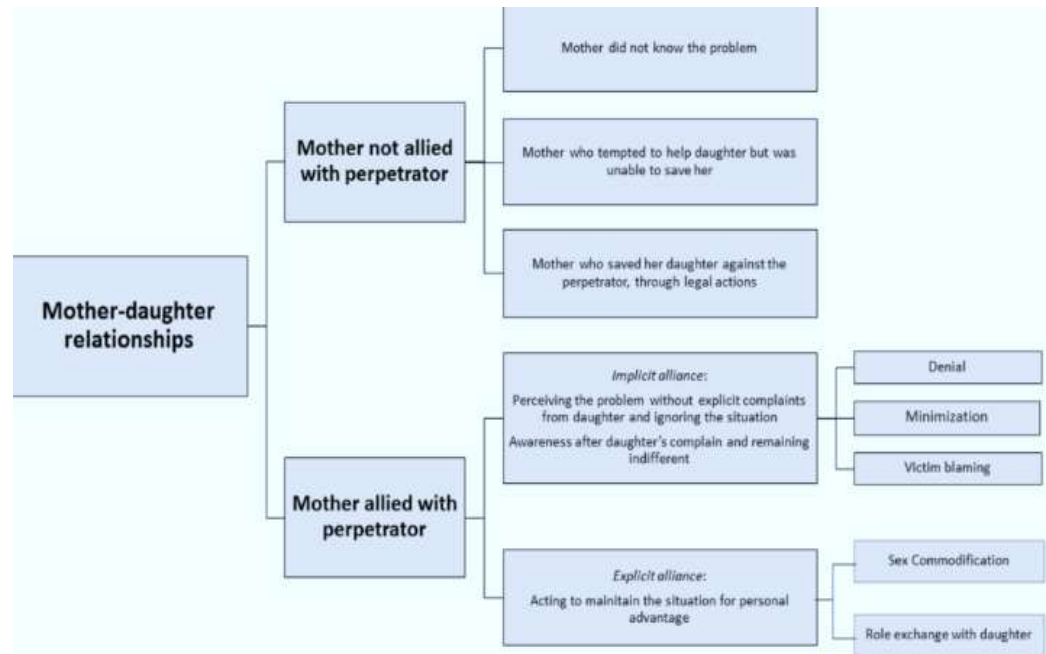


Figure 2: Flow Chat for Mother-daughter relationships

Based on the above-discussed flow chart, mothers play an important role in addressing the issue of incest. The two major categories of incest include that the mothers do not align with the perpetrators and, in most cases, are allied with them. In the case of aligning with perpetrators, the strategies they consider to involve include denial, minimisation, victim blaming, sex commodification, and the role of exchange with the daughter. All these factors are also involved in the emergence of incest (Lambert & Andipatin, 2014).

Many social and cultural factors are involved in the prevalence of interest within the Arab Society of Israel. These factors are supposed to be considered by policymakers to avoid their prevalence within this sector. The government must also introduce legal values and legislation to control the issue. To address future traumatic events, there is a need for psychotherapy to adjust to post-traumatic stress disorder and the traumas the victims face (Smit, 2021). Many cultural and societal factors are associated due to families preferring to go for e-therapy to provide treatment to the victims who suffer from incest. Fear of maintaining privacy and COVID-19 are some factors that the sexually

abused families prefer to go for e-therapy. The psychotherapist plays an important role in treating patients move to suffer from incest (Smit 2021).

The background has dictated that most families suffer from sexual violence due to previously present mental health problems. The families who are present in the aftermath of the sexual abuse are highly subjected to be impacted by different traumas due to which E therapy is provided to these victims. Also, sexually victimised children feel severe emotional trauma which is one of the major concerns of the professionals in providing them with therapy (Greydanus et al., 2017).

The psychotherapist considers many of the theoretical implications and strategies to deal with the victims of incest. Even in the case of e-therapy, the psychotherapist needs to be aware of different factors that can worsen the situation of the victims. These symptoms include interpersonal difficulties, clinical syndromes, and personality traits. Considering all these factors has an impact on controlling the traumatic events faced by the children. Within the online platforms, the therapist-patient dialogue focuses on rapport building (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018).

The pretreatment phases are essential in developing a positive relationship between the psychotherapist and the victims. While within the later phases of treatment, the psychotherapist played an influential role in discussing different symptoms and traumatic issues faced by the victim. These symptoms include suicidal feelings, dissociative phenomena, distorted self-image, sexual disturbances, and substance abuse. All these factors are essential to be considered by the psychotherapists to provide these victims with treatment (Gqgabi & El Smit, 2019)

The presence of the incest experience might involve different mental health challenges and societal fears that psychotherapists also consider. The professionals also focus on the abnormal personality traits and attitudes of the incest victims. Some examples that are usually considered to examine the personal traits of victims include said activeness, impulsivity, emotional volatility, and mistrustfulness. It is also evident that most incest victims have borderline personality disorder. This personality disorder contributes to highly polarised attitudes towards sexual partners (Strobel et al., 2013).

Overall, the above discussion has revealed that the Arab sector in Israel has confidentiality issues, due to which they do not practice discussing incest openly. The family rituals and the cultural and societal context play an important role because the families do not discuss it to maintain their reputation. Other than this, they also feared stigmatisation due to the practice of sexual abuse by an internal family member. Therefore, most inner families prefer to go for online therapies by professionals to control the prevalence of this issue age to help the victims deal with the traumatic events (Gqgabi & El Smit, 2019).

The study aims to highlight different aspects of abused children based on the case study of incest in the sector in Israel and the role of psychotherapy lists from behind the screen. Considering the above notions, this study will attempt to delve deep into the phenomenon of abused children by analysing the case study of incest in the Arab sector in Israel. In particular, the impact of sexual relationships among family members and its impact on the children, their parents, and the psychotherapist, the job will comprehensively be discussed. An evaluation of sociocultural ramifications as a result of such taboo relations and socio-demographic data within the Arab sector in Israel will be an important part of this study.

1.1 Statement of the problem

Sexual abuse is common, and without interventions to stabilize the family, the abusers frequently get away with it. The goal of therapy from behind the screen in Israel is to stabilize the family and offer support to the parent and children who have been subjected to abuse so that they may go on to understand and accept the psychotherapist's help. The experiences of children and their parents who went to incest treatment from behind the screen have not been the subject of any research. What interventions are helpful to stabilize the family and the victim are not quite evident, nor is it clear how the program supports the victim's child and parent.

1.2 Significance of the Study

The research is of greater significance as the findings will enhance the awareness of incest and the role of families and psychotherapists in controlling its prevalence. Due

to the historical and traditional views, the Arabs in Israel do not focus on discussing this issue due to the fear of stereotypic challenges and the loss of their family reputation. The research findings will help increase awareness and highlight different interventions and the role of a psychotherapist in safeguarding children within families and communities. Protection of children from sexual abuse, especially incest, will also contribute to the creation of a safe family environment where they can grow and thrive. Many cultural and societal factors are involved in the prevalence of incest who live in Arab in Israel, and it is essential to conduct research to control the increased prevalence of this issue. The findings will highlight all the factors involved within it and in executing different interventions that can contribute to the threats and challenges associated with this issue.

These kinds of relationships are regarded as blood relatives, which may involve sexual relations between a brother and sister, a mother and her son, and a father and his daughter, to name a few. Simply put, incest is sexual intercourse with harmful effects like marital difficulties between spouses and an increased risk of emotionally and physically abusing children.

Based on the above-discussed context, the current study will bring new insights that can contribute to dealing with child abuse issues based on the case study of incest. It will also contribute to bringing multiple policies that can help control its prevalence and academically; the students can also take assistance from the research findings to conduct further research. Overall, the study finds its significance in social, communal, and professional settings of Arab in Israel to control incest prevalence.

1.3 Contribution of the study

The above theoretical framework has dictated that the increased role of psychotherapists in dealing with incest cases will help decrease sexual abuse within Arab countries. An inverse relationship is presented between the role of psychotherapists and the incest cases in Arabs. It will be followed throughout the study. In addition, interviews will be utilized extensively in the study.

2. Materials and Methods

The study was based on the qualitative method. The qualitative tradition, data gathering and analysis occur concurrently (Baxter & Jack, 2018). Depending on the researcher's approach, case study data analysis might frequently be the most challenging portion of the study (Yin, 2019). According to Yin (2019), the investigation's data analysis phase should begin by assessing the study's questions. According to Yin (2019), starting in this way enables the researcher to locate the data that addresses the inquiry, enabling the researcher to construct a conclusion. Each question was to be followed by the same procedure, and so on, until all were answered. This in-depth comprehension of each research topic helped me respond more effectively to the overall research question.

3. Results:

Thematic Analysis

Theme 1: Definition of incest

Most of the respondents stuttered at first, by definition, there was silence and then defined it as recitation: Incest refers to sexual activity between family members closely related by blood or adoption. This can include sexual contact between siblings, parent and child, grandparents and grandson, uncles and aunts which is surprising that most of them referred to a cousin as being included in incest. Most of them noted that there are various forms of incest abuse, indecent acts, harassment, sodomy, most of which are not committed with threats.

One of the respondents said: *“Incest is a very disturbing phenomenon that usually describe a forbidden sexual relationship among the family member.”*

Theme 2: Prevalence of child abuse and Incest in the Arab sector in Israel

The interviewees repeated the same theme it is difficult for us to know, fewer noted statistics, which was repeated due to the sensitive nature of these issues it can be difficult to accurately measure the prevalence of child abuse and incest as many cases are not reported or are not reported there are no official data on prevalence in the Arab sector in Israel.. On respondents said regarding the prevalence of child abuse and incest in the Arab

sector in Israel: *“Due to the fact that this phenomenon is very sensitive and it is even considered as a taboo, it is difficult to give a clear image the prevalence of child abuse in general and incest in particular in the Arab sector in Israel”*

Theme 3: The psychotherapist role in dealing with child abuse and Incest phenomenon

According to the interviews, the psychotherapist has key role in dealing with the phenomenon of child abuse in general and the incest phenomenon in particular. Firstly, the treatment creates a safe and protected, this does not take place then the treatment in the treatment room will be useless especially when it comes to incest, He supports the victim in order to share his experiences and feelings and thoughts without fear of judgment.

Moreover, the therapist works with the child and family to develop a treatment plan that addresses the unique needs of the victim, including emotional or psychological problems and symptoms from abuse. The therapist uses a variety of therapeutic approaches, play therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, dialectical behavioral therapy, family therapy or dynamic therapy, to help the victim process the trauma of the abuse and develop coping skills.

One respondent said: *“...the therapist must provide a safe environment for the therapy process, in this environment it will be able for the abused child to share his experiences, feelings and fears, without any fear of judgment...”*

Theme 4: Methods of treatment for child abuse in general and the phenomenon of incest in particular:

The main methods were, Individual or group counseling, cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), play therapy, desensitization and eye movement reprocessing (EMDR). It can be used to treat symptoms such as anxiety, depression or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), relaxation, mind and body Treatment, SE treatment method. An approach that believes that during trauma the body embraces the trauma and the focus is to release the trauma from the body referral to support services such as victim advocacy programs or legal aid. A therapist in Arab society must use everything connected to the culture from which the patient comes from and to his world of values and cultural characteristics.

One therapist mentioned: “ *Some of the most common methods of therapy are, Individual or group counseling, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), play therapy, eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR)....Theses methods can be used to treat symptoms such as anxiety, depression or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).*”

Theme 5: Special treatment and coping methods for the Arab sector:

The interviewees raised some important issue regarding the Arab sector in Israel. First, in Arab society there are cultural and social factors that must be taken into account, for example stigma or shame associated with these issues and this may make it difficult for victims and victims to come and ask for help, there are also cultural beliefs and customs that can contribute to and perpetuate child abuse, for example family structure on date on attitudes towards gender and sexuality.

One therapist said: “*there are a great importance and influence of the cultural and the social factors in the Arab sector in Israel, the fear of shame and stigma associated with theses issues may cause the victims not talk about them or ask for help.*”

Additional point under this theme was, that it is important to approach the issue of child abuse and incest in Arab society with cultural sensitivity and high awareness and commitment in cultural and social factors. This can include working with community leaders, sometimes also using clerics, providing education and awareness of child abuse and its impact and adapting treatment methods.

One respondent added: “*When dealing with child abuse and incest cases in the Arab sector it is important to be very sensitive and fully aware to the social and cultural circumstances. For example, we can usually ask for the community leaders and clerics... we also try to raise the awareness for the child abuse phenomenon, adapt the treatment methods for each case*”

Another point regarding the treatment methods in the Arab society, there are no special methods of treatments for the Arab sector. The treatment methods are universal, but the way they are being used differ according to the context, it all depends on the challenges that the therapists face during the therapy process..

For example, one of the therapists said: *“there are universal treatment methods As in different cultures, the difference is in preparing the infrastructure in recruiting families to come to treatment, there is a difference in awareness of the cases that exist among other societies or in a large part of Arab society”*

Another barrier for the treatment process is the language barrier, the interviewees claimed that, there is a problem in using therapeutic language in Arabic. Especially, that the professional terms are usually in English and Hebrew and it is difficult to find equivalent terms in Arabic.

About the language barrier, one therapist said: *“... is difficult to translate and also that to translate in the exact meaning. All the treatment methods are taught to us in Hebrew and English. Another problem is that it is difficult to talk about sex, sexuality, sexual abuse.”*

Furthermore, the participants talked about unconventional ways of treatment that they use when dealing with incest cases in the Arab sector in Israel. Such as, using verses from the Quran or praising using a rosary, or asking for religious people in order to reduce stress and calm the victims and their families.

One therapist said: *“in the Arab sector we sometimes integrate religious beliefs in order to calm down the abused child or even his family, for example we can use a rosary which saying verses from the Quran”*

Another point that raised from the interviews was the “obligation to report”, in the cases of child abuse in general and Incest in particular there are an obligation to report, but this step can harm the entire extended family and creates a negative stigma on the whole family. Therefore, in many cases, the therapists avoid reporting to the police and even get a special approval not to do so because it can harm the victim and threaten murder. Especially, that it is a known fact that in the Arab culture, the norm imposes to keep everything within the family, and as one respondent said *“not hang the dirty laundry out.”*

In this case, one therapist said: *“we do our best to avoid reporting the cases of child abuse, especially incests to the police and try to solve the problem within the family, because the consequences will be catastrophic not only to the victim, but also the whole family..”*

Another important consequence of the cases of child abuse and that almost only in the Arab sector is being treated a priority is the “virgin chromium”, one part of dealing of the problem in the eyes of the Arab sector, is to make sure that the female victim is still a virgin. The therapists in the interviews described the joy and relief that the families show when discovering that the victim is still a virgin, and on the other hand they talked about the sadness and disappointment that the families demonstrate when they discover that the victim has lost her virginity. The therapists also described the disappointment of the victim due to the reaction of their families, they feel that their feelings and the trauma they’ve gone through doesn’t matter.

Regarding this point one respondent said: ” *the most important thing to families, before even the treatment is to check the the virgin chromium, غشاء البكارة, when the family discover that the victim is still a virgin they become very happy and feel that the problem is not that serious*”

A final point in this theme was the relationship of the families with the authorities especially the police. The therapists insisted that families usually avoid dealing with authorities because they are afraid that the police will interfere and take away the victim, which will harm the reputation of the family.

On respondent described the perception of the families regarding the police: “ *most of the families has fear of the government, of the police, because they usually say that the victims’ homes is not always the safe place, if a report is made to the police, there is a strong fear that the police will take the victims away*”.

Theme 6: The transition to treatment during the COVID-19 period from in-person to behind-the-screen therapy

Various sub themes were identified under this category relating to COVID 19. Three themes were identified: preparation for online therapy for therapists, patients and their families, online platform used by therapists today and the availability/readiness of the resources required to conduct online therapy in Arab society in Israel.

Theme 6a: Preparation for online therapy for therapists, patients and families

The interviewees claimed that the preparation for the new way of therapy during COVID-19 was insufficient and superficial. There were no clear instructions, everything was through trial and error, in the Arab society there was no clear internet infrastructure, most of the patients had a low socioeconomic status, and the training that was given did not match the needs of the Arab society.

For example one therapist said: “*we didn’t get enough guidance and preparation for the new way of therapy behind the screen, we had to learn things on our own during the process.*”

Theme 6b: Online platform used by therapists today

From the answers, it was clear that there are no special platforms for behind the screen therapy, the therapists used the different technological devices randomly and without any plan, they used phone calls, WhatsApp, video calls, zoom meetings .

On respondent said: “ *we use whatever is available, for example at first, we used the phone and had regular conversations, then we switched to WhatsApp, after that we used Zoom meetings..*”

Theme 6c: Availability/readiness of the resources required to conduct online therapy in Arab society in Israel

Depending on the interviews, all of the respondents agreed that the resources for behind-the-screen therapy is very limited, especially in the Arab sector in Israel. Although, computer was distributed by the government to the families, it was after along time since the pandemic have started. Moreover, most families have maybe children and therefore the computers were not enough. Another problem, is the physical environment of the Arab homes, usually, there were no safe and quit space for holding the therapy meeting.

A therapist mentioned: “ *one of the problems is lack of resources, for example not all families had internet or computer, it is true that the government has distributed computers for the families, but it was late* “

Theme 7: Dealing with the phenomenon of incest using the online method

Three themes emerged in this section: (1) Effect of online treatment on patients (2) Effect of online therapy on therapists (3) The relationship between therapist and patient.

Theme 7a: Effect of online treatment on patients

The interviewees mentioned many negative consequences on the patients, which they are trying to deal with, such as keeping in touch with the patients, keeping the patients from dropping out, reach the objective and aims of the therapy plan.

For example, someone said: *“the most dominant in using therapy behind screens that was not therapy, was maintaining contact, keeping the therapists from dropping out, keeping in touch, not as it was before touching clear content and goals”*

Additional point of this way of treatment was the stress and fear that the corona crises has created. Some of the participants said that in addition of dealing with the bad experience of abuse, some children talked about their fear of the corona virus and the feeling that they are imprisoned and had to stay indoors, everything was enforced on them even the online meeting of therapy.

One of the therapist said: *“the whole situation was stressful, especially for the patients, they have to deal with additional fear, which is the fear of the corona... the felt like they were in prison, therefore they were resistant to the therapy.”*

Furthermore, the therapist explained how difficult for the patients to accept and cooperate with the therapist behind the screen, some of them felt unsafe and it was hard for them to talk about their feelings and thoughts freely. Moreover, some of the patients felt that there was an intrusion of privacy, there were embarrassed to show the situation at home, like the furniture, shouting or fights.... etc.

According to one respondent: *“Many patients were frightened to see their faces in front of the screen, it was difficult to be exposed to what was happening to them and how the therapist interpreted it.”*

But, it must be noted that from few patient this way of therapy was convenient, they felt free were to sit, they have control on when to end the session, they don't have to arrange transportation to get to a treatment center, and the most important thing they will not be seen arriving for treatment.

For example a therapist said: *“Some patients appreciated the new way of treatment, they said they felt a lot of freedom in choosing the place and the time of therapy... some even were felt relief that no one will see them coming to the therapy center.”*

Theme 7b: Effect of online therapy on therapists

Most of the therapists express negative feelings and experience when talking about the online therapy. Most of them expressed frustration and stress. They didn't feel any connection to the screen, they even felt that their professional ego was hurt. Moreover, the feeling of lack of experience and control over the new devices, especially among old therapists make it difficult form many therapists to conduct their therapy plans in a proper and professional way.

According to one of the interviewees: *“this was one of the most difficult experiences in my career life, the uncertainty, the frustration put everything in my experience into a questions, I have to deal with many new things that I was not ready for”*

Additional difficulty that they mentioned was, the lack of ability to see concrete things and indications through the face-to-face therapy meetings, such as body language and facial expressions. And the most important thing, they are not able to control who will be with th child during the online meeting, maybe the offender is there with them.

On this matter one therapist said: *“ it all about lack of control, we as therapists can control the face to face session, we can see every movement, every eye blink and learn from it. In the online therapy, we lose this control we can't even make sure that the abusing family member is not there with the child during the session”*

Theme 7c: The relationship between therapist and patient

The therapist-patient relationship important determinant of treatment outcome and is considered central to the therapeutic process. All of the participants agreed that the online therapy had a negative impact on the therapist-patient relationship. The feeling of distance, made the patient feel that the therapist is an outsider a stranger who lives in a different place. They stressed that the most important bases of the therapist-patient relationship are trust, and trust is build with time and effort. Through online therapy, this process is harmed, it is difficult for the therapist to build trust-based relationship between the therapist and the patient, especially with the difficulties that we mentioned before regarding keeping meeting schedule and the technical problem that they may face.

On therapist said: *“The online therapy deprives us from building the bridge of trust between the patients and us, we felt a wall, our patients couldn’t be open enough with us.?”*

Theme 8: the impact of online therapy method on parents/guardians; Perception, acceptance, readiness, responsiveness, cooperation.

All of the participants focused on the importance of the family involvement in the therapy process. They also emphasize that parent engagement in the treatment process is particularly important for child and family treatment given the critical role that parents. The main reason for that is, the impact of family context on children’s development and behavior. The participants, mentioned that the therapists has no control in building a safe environment for both the child and his family during the therapy session.

One participant said: *“if we look at the therapy process in the online method, we can clearly see that it is not a complete success, especially due to the lack of immediate relationship between the therapist and the parent. Because families have and important role in the treatment process.”*

4. Discussion

From the answers of the interviewees, the incidence of this phenomenon is only approximate, although it is clear that its dimensions are common. There are no exact data

regarding sexual abuse in general and incest in particular against children, only estimates. However, it is clear that sexual violence against children, especially girls, is a very common phenomenon. This result may be explained by looking at the characteristics and the situation of the Arab sector in Israel. The Arab society in Israel is described as having a patriarchal collectivist nature, with a set of laws that give the traditional man supremacy (Meler, 2017).

Moreover, in this society, there is concern for maintaining harmony within the family, without revealing family disputes to others who are outside the family system. Therefore, the individual is required to show maximum consideration for others and concern for the integrity of the extended family even when he is required to make personal decisions. obedience to it (Sinai & Shehade, 2019). Furthermore, Arab society emphasizes the main role of family and the importance of family honor, religion, virginity, and therefore topics in the areas of sex are taboo and cannot be spoken and discussed (Shlomi & Zionit, 2015).

Inbar Lebkowitz and Sna Kamel Jabor (2020) claim that the percentage of Arab children who are victims of sexual abuse is similar to the percentage of children who have experienced sexual abuse in other societies, with no difference between the two genders. Children who have been sexually assaulted, like children in other societies, suffer from a variety of psychological problems, such as anxiety, phobias, nightmares, suicidal thoughts, antisocial behaviors, paranoid thoughts, depression, aggressiveness, and are more likely to leave their home.

According to the answers, the psychotherapist has a significant role in dealing with this phenomenon. First and foremost, they have to create a safe environment for the abused child. Second, they have to build a special treatment plan for the victim and his family.

Furthermore, the main techniques included cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), play therapy, desensitization, and eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR). It can be used as a relaxation, mind-body, or SE therapeutic strategy to treat symptoms of anxiety, depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Regarding the Arab sector, there were no special treatment methods, but the therapists made some adjustments to the

existing methods to make them more appealing to the Arab culture, like integrating verses from the Quran.

In addition, the majority of the psychotherapists had negative perception regarding the online therapy, they claimed that during COVID-19, the preparation for the new kind of therapy was inadequate and insufficient. The majority of the patients had poor socioeconomic positions, there were no clear instructions, everything had to be learned by trial and error, and the provided training did not take into account the needs of Arab society. Many previous studies showed a similar position toward online therapy, for example in the study of Kotera and his colleagues (2021), they found that all participants agreed that restricted physical contact and body language, both of which might be further harmed by technological disruptions, are the most significant limitations of online treatment.

Moreover, Regarding the impact of the online therapy on the abused child, the study has revealed a number of negative consequences:

First, the respondents discussed a variety of difficulties that have to deal with during online therapy, including maintaining contact with the patients, preventing drop-off, and achieving the goal and objectives of the therapy plan. Second, the tension and terror that the Corona Crisis generated was a further problem. Some of the participants claimed that in addition to dealing with their past experiences of abuse, some also discussed their dread of the coronavirus and how they felt imprisoned and forced to stay indoors, even the online therapy sessions were imposed on them. Third, the therapist also discussed how challenging it was for the patients to comply with and accept the therapist working behind a screen; some of them felt unsafe and found it difficult to express their feelings and thoughts in a natural way. Additionally, some of the patients felt that their privacy had been violated and some were embarrassed to provide details about their personal lives, especially when details from their personal life are shown in the background, such as the furniture or loud voices of arguments between their family members.

Moreover, These results match the results of another research by Collin-Vézina, Brend, and Beeman, (2020), who found that access to a private, secure setting for therapeutic sessions is another physical restriction while conducting an online therapy

session. It is advised that treatment sessions take place in a closed-off space with a door, preferably not the child's bedroom. Children may not have access to a private space in low-income families with little space, especially during a pandemic when other family members are present. As a result, it is possible that client confidentiality may be jeopardized. To rule out this possibility, procedures to limit this risk should be discussed and repeatedly examined with the client. (Collin-Vézina, Brend, and Beeman, 2020)

In addition, one of the most significant results of the study was the negative impact of online therapy on the psychotherapists' work, which was clearly demonstrated by the participants, when discussing online therapy, the majority of the therapists express their unpleasant thoughts and experiences. The majority of them indicated stress and frustration. They felt no connection to the screen, and their professional ego even felt bruised.

Additionally, many therapists find it challenging to carry out their treatment plans in a proper and professional manner due to their perception of a lack of familiarity with and control over the new technologies, especially among older therapists. Another issue they raised was their inability to observe physical cues and signs during face-to-face therapy sessions, such as body language and facial expressions. The most crucial factor is that they have no control over who will be with the child during the online meeting; it's possible that the attacker will be present.

Furthermore, according to the study results, The therapist-patient relationship is seen to be crucial to the therapeutic process and a significant driver of treatment outcomes. Everyone who took part in the study agreed that the therapist-patient relationship suffered as a result of online therapy. The patient felt that the therapist was an outsider, a stranger, who lived somewhere else because of the sense of separation. They emphasized that trust is the cornerstone of a successful therapeutic alliance and that it takes time and effort to develop. This process is affected by online treatment; it is challenging for the therapist to establish a rapport based on trust with the patient, particularly given the challenges we previously noted regarding meeting schedule adherence and potential technological issues.

These results are in line with results of previous studies, such as the study of Kaluzeviciute (2020), a number of significant issues with therapist privacy, virtual

impingements, through which online discoveries alter the physical therapeutic relationship, and a desire to internalize digital versions of the therapist or digital communications, such as developing transference through email exchanges, were identified as challenges to therapeutic relationships caused by the digital space and social media.

Similar results were also found by previous studies for example Scharff, (2013) found that one of the main criticisms against this way of treatment was the space, hour, and season of the environment for each of them may fluctuate significantly due to the therapist's and patient's different locales. Compared to traditional therapy, it could initially be more challenging to establish the treatment contract and collaborative relationship between the therapist and patient. Additionally, it could be harder for the patient to commit to therapy, making it simpler to stop the course of treatment.

Moreover, all of the participants emphasized the value of including the family in the therapeutic process. Additionally, they stress how crucial it is for parents to participate in the therapy process because of the vital role that parents play in their children's and families wellbeing. The primary cause of this is the influence of family setting on children's behavior and development. According to the participants, the therapists have no influence over creating a safe environment for the child and his family throughout the therapy session. According to a study of Simons, Noordegraaf and Van Regenmortel (2022), there has been a rise in reports of family violence as well as the risk of violence towards children and adolescents.

Finally, according to the study results, a number of benefits were mentioned by the participants regarding the use of online therapy, first Accessing care might be hampered by factors like transportation, location, or scheduling conflicts. Online therapy can help. Regardless of location, online therapy can be customized to meet the needs of the child and his family and can take the form of individual, family, or support group treatment. The use of technology in therapy can provide more schedule flexibility and enable treatment to be delivered in a variety of settings, including the therapist's office, a clinic, the child's home, or a classroom. Second, Arab society may have a stigma associated with seeking therapy, therefore behind screens can help reduce this stigma by providing anonymity and privacy. Third, Children may be more involved in therapy when

using technology because it can be a familiar and convenient medium for them. Fourth, online therapy can be more economically affordable than personal care because it eliminates the need for travel and reduces overall costs for the parents, especially in Arab society in which the socioeconomic situation is particularly low. Fifth, since there aren't many Arab therapists in the field, those who live in rural or isolated places sometimes lack access to health care. However, behind-the-screen counseling can provide them with access to therapies for sexual abuse. Since the topic of sexual abuse is still taboo in some parts of Arab society, therapy conducted behind screens can help preserve secrecy by lowering the probability that others would learn about treatment sessions.

We can find additional benefits of online therapy, in the study of Kaluzeviciute and his colleagues (2021) think that even when there is a physical distance, e-therapy upholds the fundamental principles of conventional one-on-one therapy. For instance, the amount of physical communication that occurs online is comparable to that of an in-person analytical session. Other advantages of the e-therapy claim that other modalities will likely compensate when the route of touch or smell in communication is closed, as it does when it is done online. Additionally, some supporters emphasize the telepresence phenomenon as a crucial element of online treatment.

5. Conclusion

Based on a case study of incest in the Arab part of Israel, this study significantly advances our understanding of the various components of child abuse. An ecologically based theoretical model or framework of practice for behind-the-scenes sexual abuse therapy with child victims has been developed in light of the findings. The study has also brought attention to gaps in the existing evidence-based research on treating abused children in the Arab sector and its perceived shortcomings by experts and practitioners. The theoretical model has shown to be familiar and practical for practitioners and other researchers with whom findings have thus far been shared. The study's practical recommendations for additional research, application, and policy are included (Council, 2021).

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