

„I'm struggling through life“

Testimonials of adult survivors of child sexual abuse

Assistant Professor Dr. M. Rassenhofer

Vienna, 2nd July 2019

„Thinking from the victims’ point of view was a central principle of the reappraisal process.’

(Final report of the Independent Commissioner, 2011)

Medial scandal in 2010 and reappraisal process

Berliner Morgenpost

KRIMINALITÄT

Canisius-Kolleg: Missbrauchsfälle an Berliner Eliteschule

An dem von Jesuiten betriebenen Canisius-Kolleg in Tiergarten sind über Jahrzehnte hinweg Schüler von Lehrern sexuell missbraucht worden. "Mit tiefer Erschütterung und Scham habe ich diese



SPIEGEL ONLINE DER SPIEGEL

Odenwaldschule

Pädagogen teilten "sexuelle Dienstleister" fürs Wochenende ein

Nach der langen Reihe bekanntgewordener Missbrauchsfälle ringt die katholische Kirche um ihre Glaubwürdigkeit. Sie ist jedoch nicht die einzige Institution, die solche Vorkommnisse vertuschte. Jetzt wurden auch an einer bekannten hessischen Privatschule Fälle von sexueller Gewalt bekannt.

Unabhängige Beauftragte zur Aufarbeitung des sexuellen Kindesmissbrauchs

Telefonische Anlaufstelle
0800 - 22 55 530
(kostenfrei)

Sprechzeiten:
Mo: 8 bis 14 Uhr
Di, Mi, Fr: 16 bis 22 Uhr
So: 14 bis 20 Uhr

- Startseite
- Unabhängige Beauftragte
- Glossar
- Fragen und Antworten
- Rechtliche Themen
- Begleitforschung
- Expertenmeinung
- Literaturempfehlung
- Aktuelles
- Presse
- Download
- Interner Bereich

Hierlich willkommen bei der Unabhängigen Beauftragten

Der Schutz von Kindern vor Missbrauch und Gewalt ist eine unserer wichtigsten Aufgaben. Kinder können sich nicht zur Wehr setzen und leiden meist ein Leben lang unter den Folgen sexuellen Missbrauchs.

[mehr >](#)

Aktuelles

Erste Ergebnisse aus dem Zwischenbericht der wissenschaftlichen Begleitforschung der telefonischen Anlaufstelle

Berlin, 21. September 2010. Auf der heutigen Pressekonferenz zum Start der Kampagne „Sprechen hilft“ der Unabhängigen Beauftragten zur Aufarbeitung des sexuellen Kindesmissbrauchs wurden auch erste Ergebnisse aus der Dokumentation und Auswertung der Anrufe in der telefonischen Anlaufstelle vorgestellt. Der vollständige Zwischenbericht wird bei der 2. Sitzung des Runden

Presse

„Wer das Schweigen bricht, bricht die Macht der Täter“ Dr. Christine Bergmann stellt Kampagne vor / Wim Wenders präsentiert Spots Forschung: Missbrauchsoffer melden sich frühestens 20 Jahre nach der Tat

Berlin, 21. September 2010. Unter dem Motto „Sprechen hilft“ startet die Unabhängige Beauftragte zur

Kontakt und Informationen für Betroffene

Zur Kampagne

www.sprechen-hilft.de
Zum Kampagnenmaterial

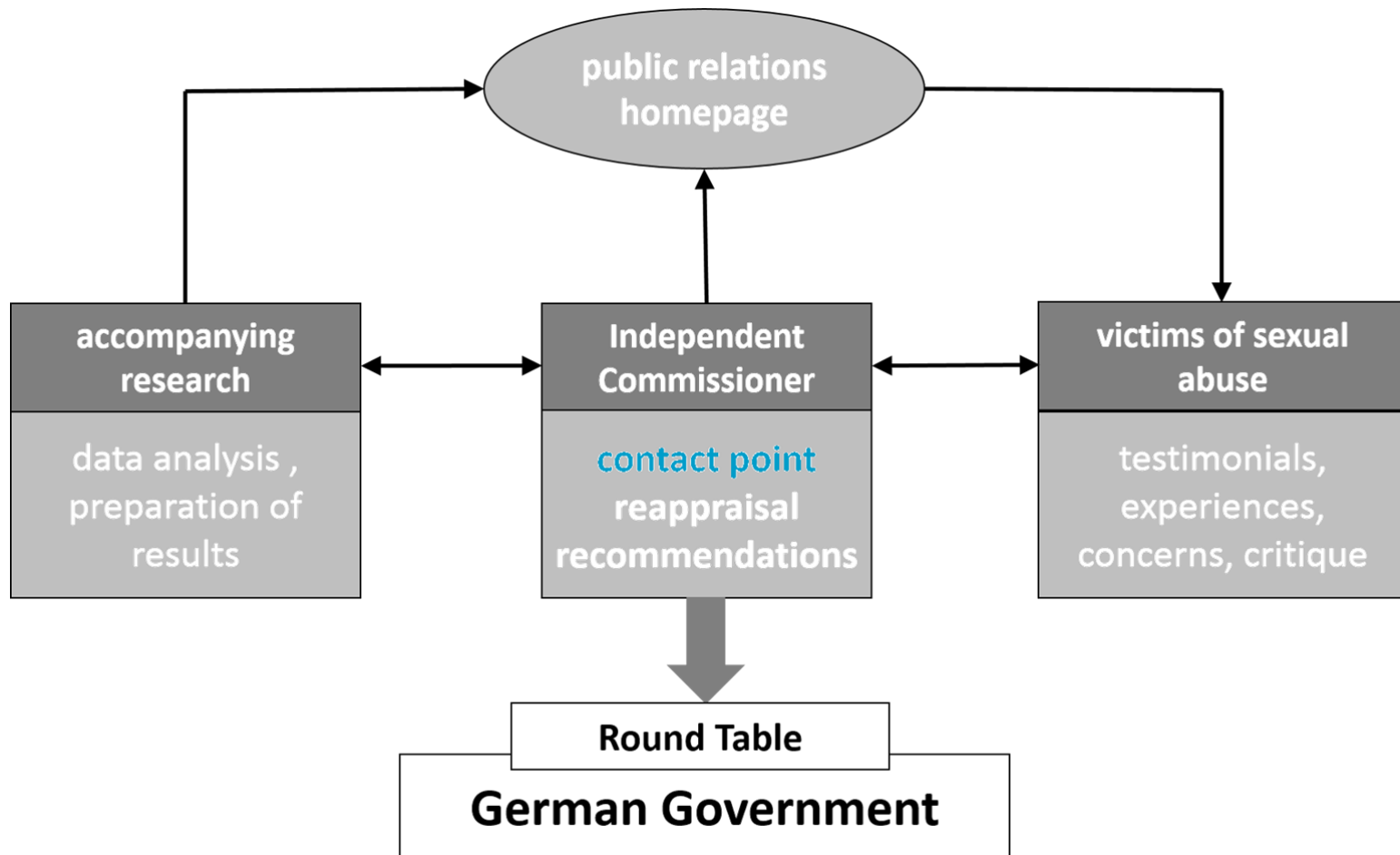
Themen

- Runder Tisch >
- Sexueller Missbrauch >
- Anzeigepflicht >
- Führungsteugnis >
- Verjährungsfristen >



Round Table "Child Sexual Abuse in Relationships of Dependence and Imbalance of Power in Private and Public Institutions and in Families"

Independent Commissioner for the Reappraisal of Child Sexual Abuse



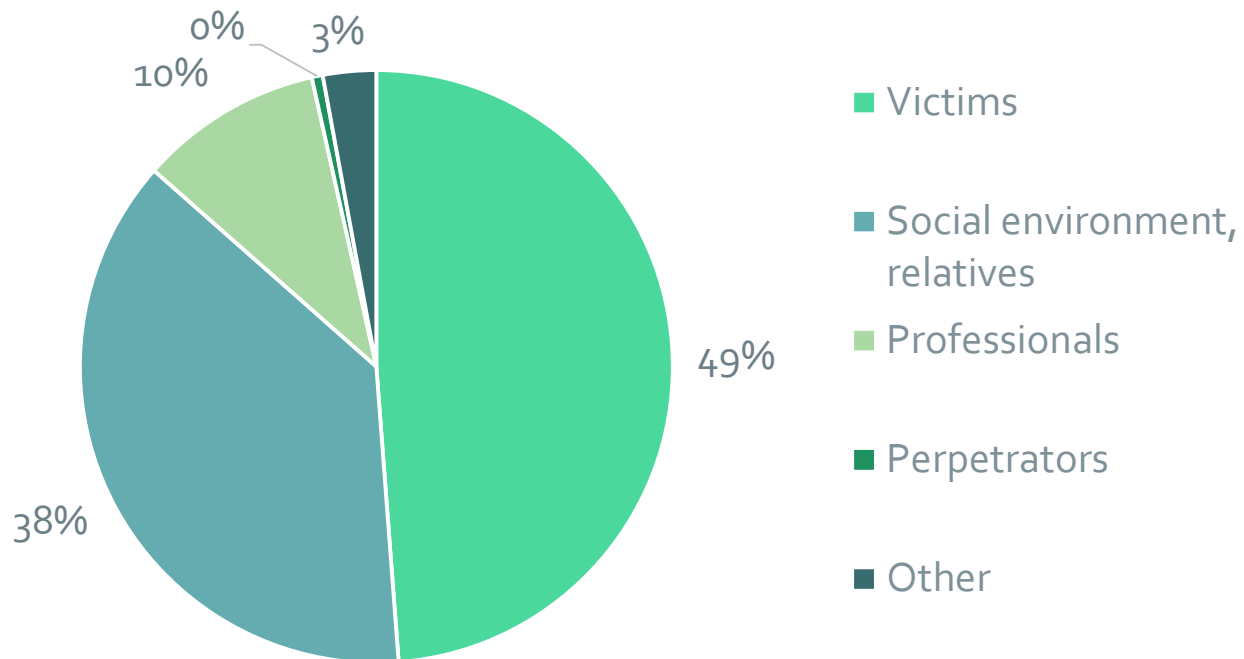
Helpline „Sexual abuse“

- Offer of the Independent Commissioner
- Germany-wide, free and anonymous contact point
- Focus: Counseling and information transfer
- Accompanying research process since January 2016



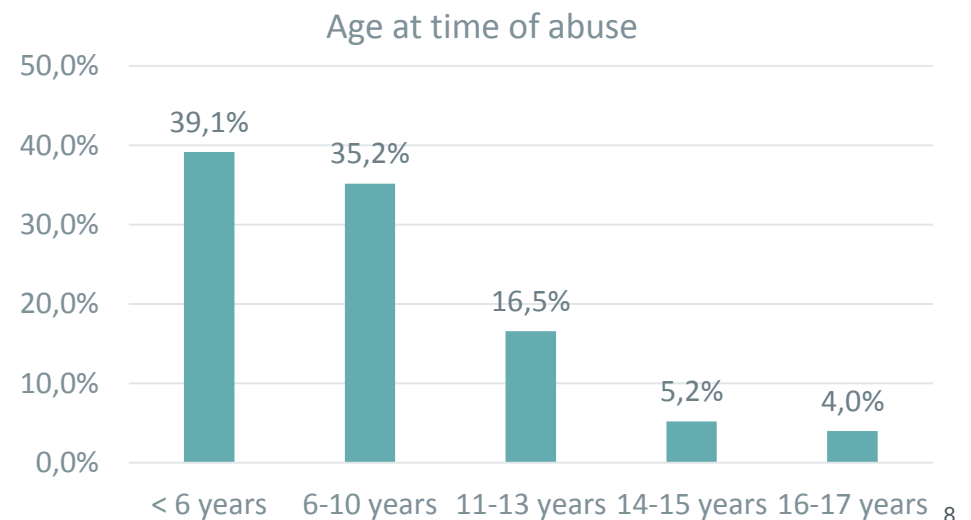
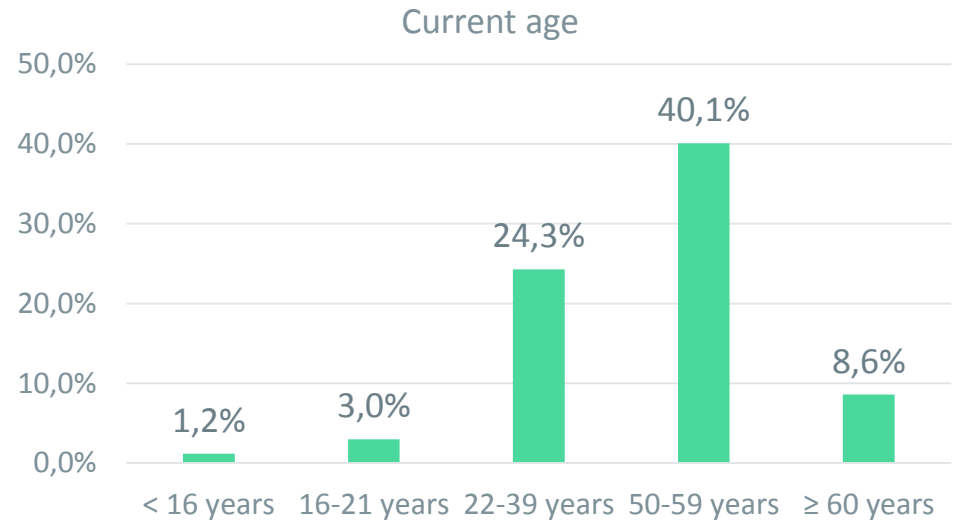
Sample of victims

Who is calling the helpline?

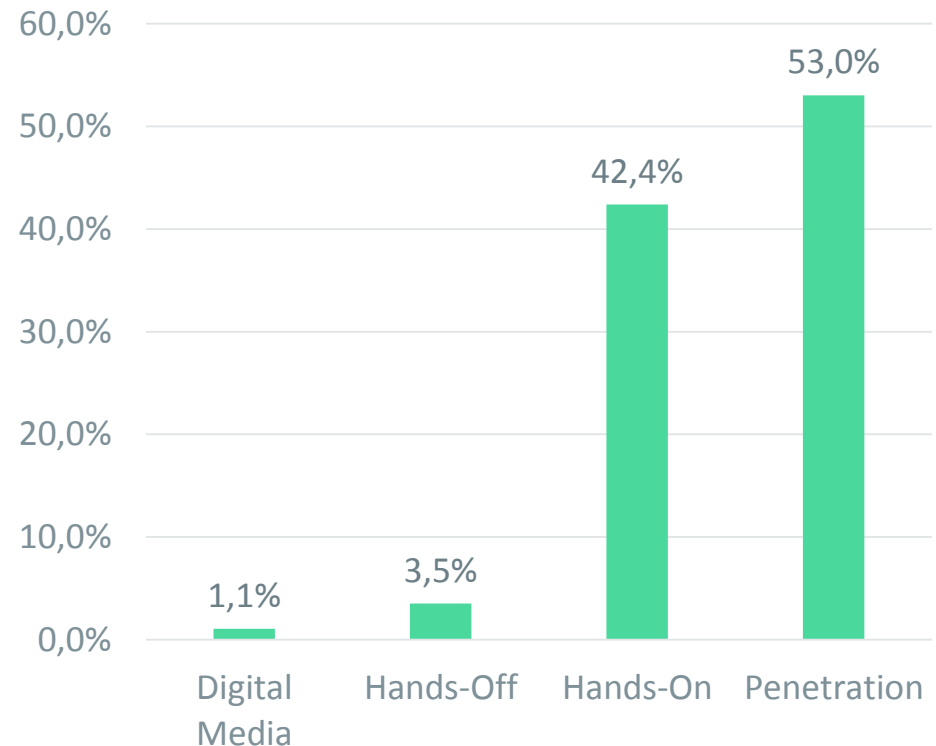


Who are the victims?

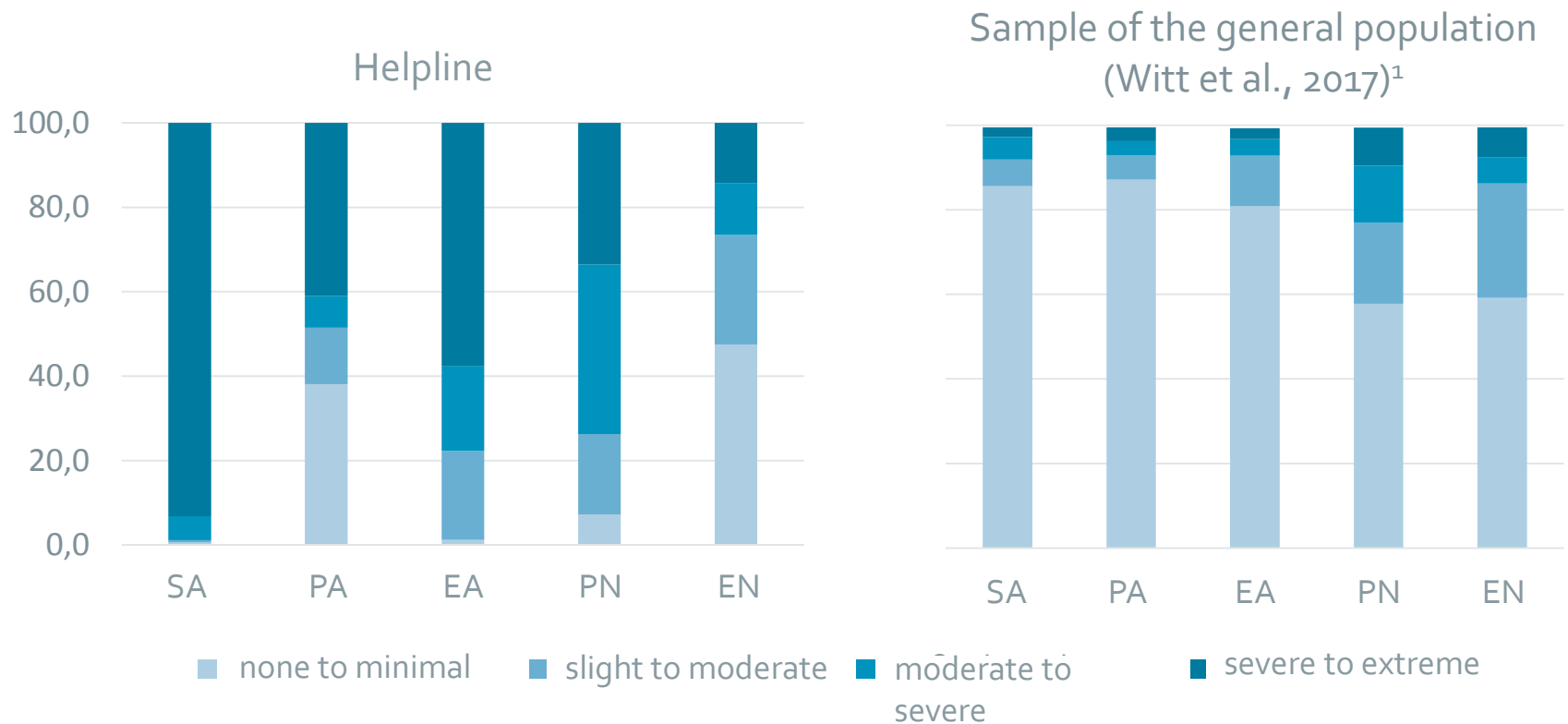
- Gender
 - 76.6% female
- Current age
 - M=45.4 years (SD=14.06)
- Age at time of abuse
 - M = 7.1 years (SD=4.22)



- **Date**
 - predominantly (96%) cases of the past
- **Frequency**
 - less than 10% one-time acts
- **Type of abuse**
 - shift towards severe types of abuse
 - predominantly hands-on, high percentage with penetration

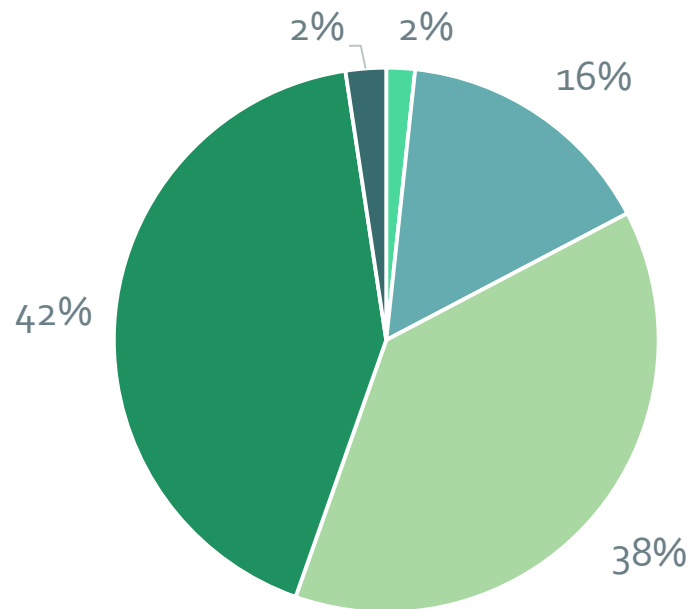


Types and severity of maltreatment



¹Witt, A., Brown, R. C., Plener, P. L., Brähler, E., & Fegert, J. M. (2017). Child maltreatment in Germany: prevalence rates in the general population. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health, 11*(1), 47.

Number of different types of maltreatment



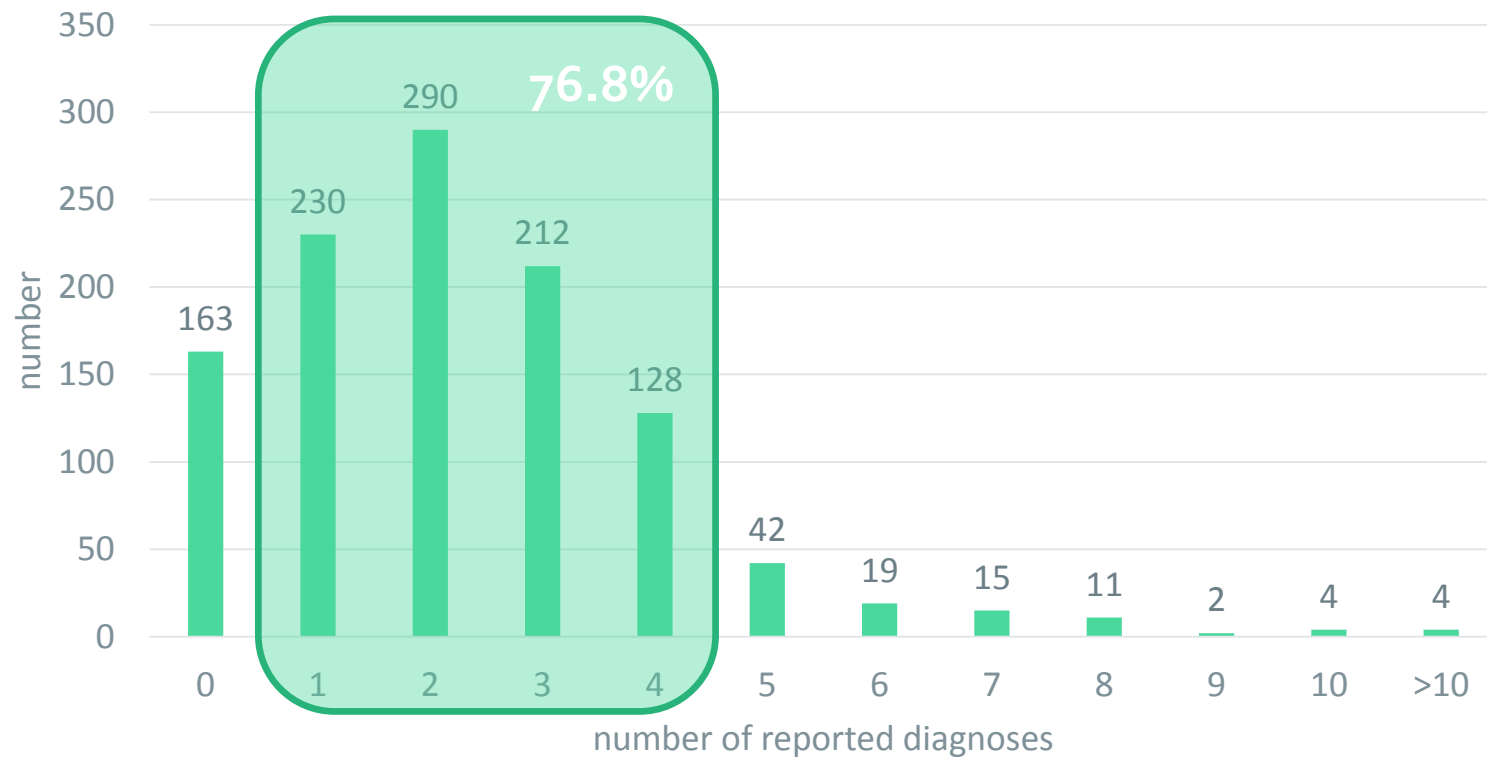
■ 1 type ■ 2 types ■ 3 types
■ 4 types ■ 5 types

- Moderate – extreme maltreatment: More than **80%** of the victims experienced **at least 3 types of maltreatment**
- Slight – extreme maltreatment: **99%** experienced **at least 3 types of maltreatment**

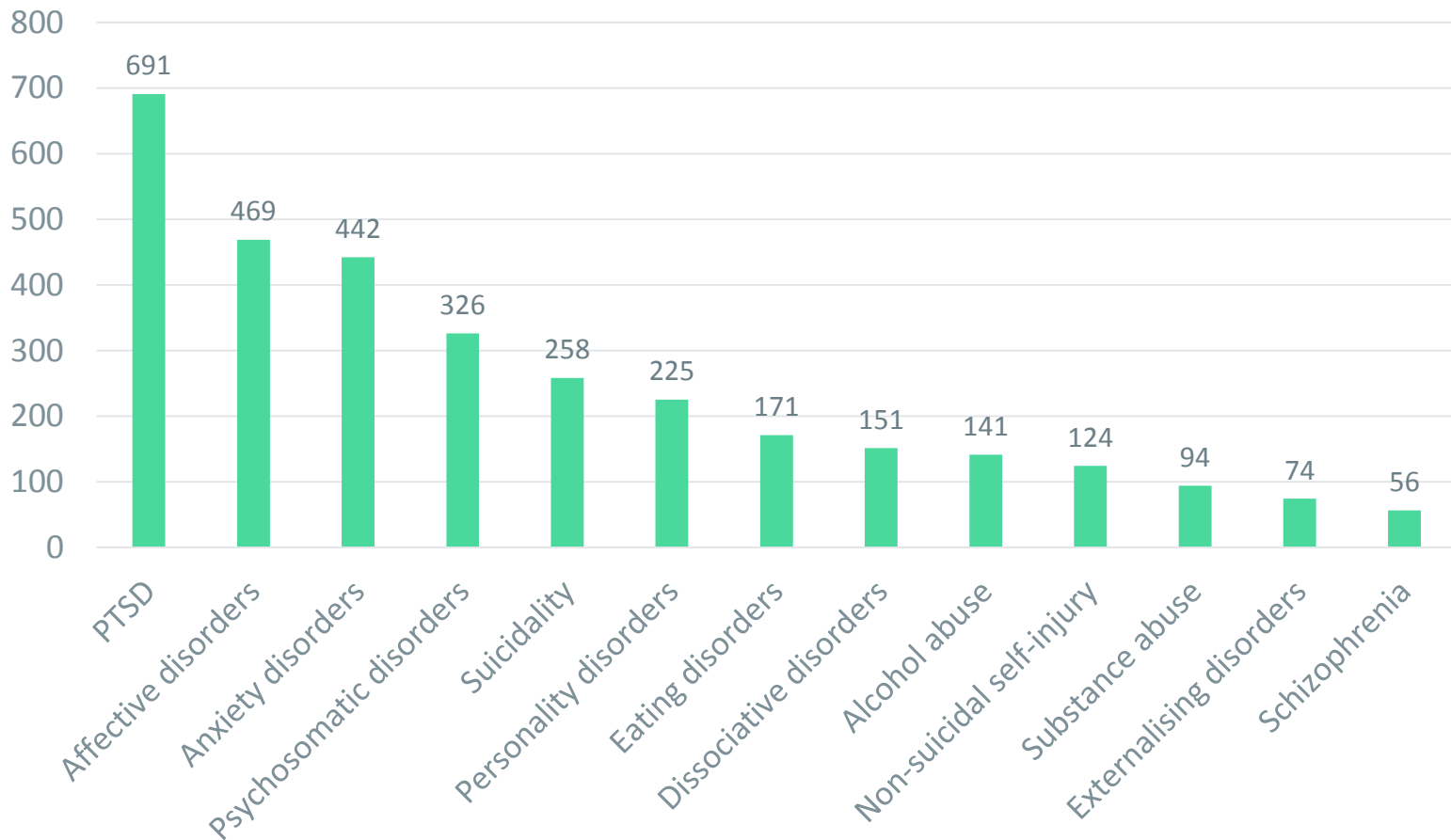
Consequences

Number of reported diagnoses

Mean= 2.3 (SD=1.90)
Median= 2.0

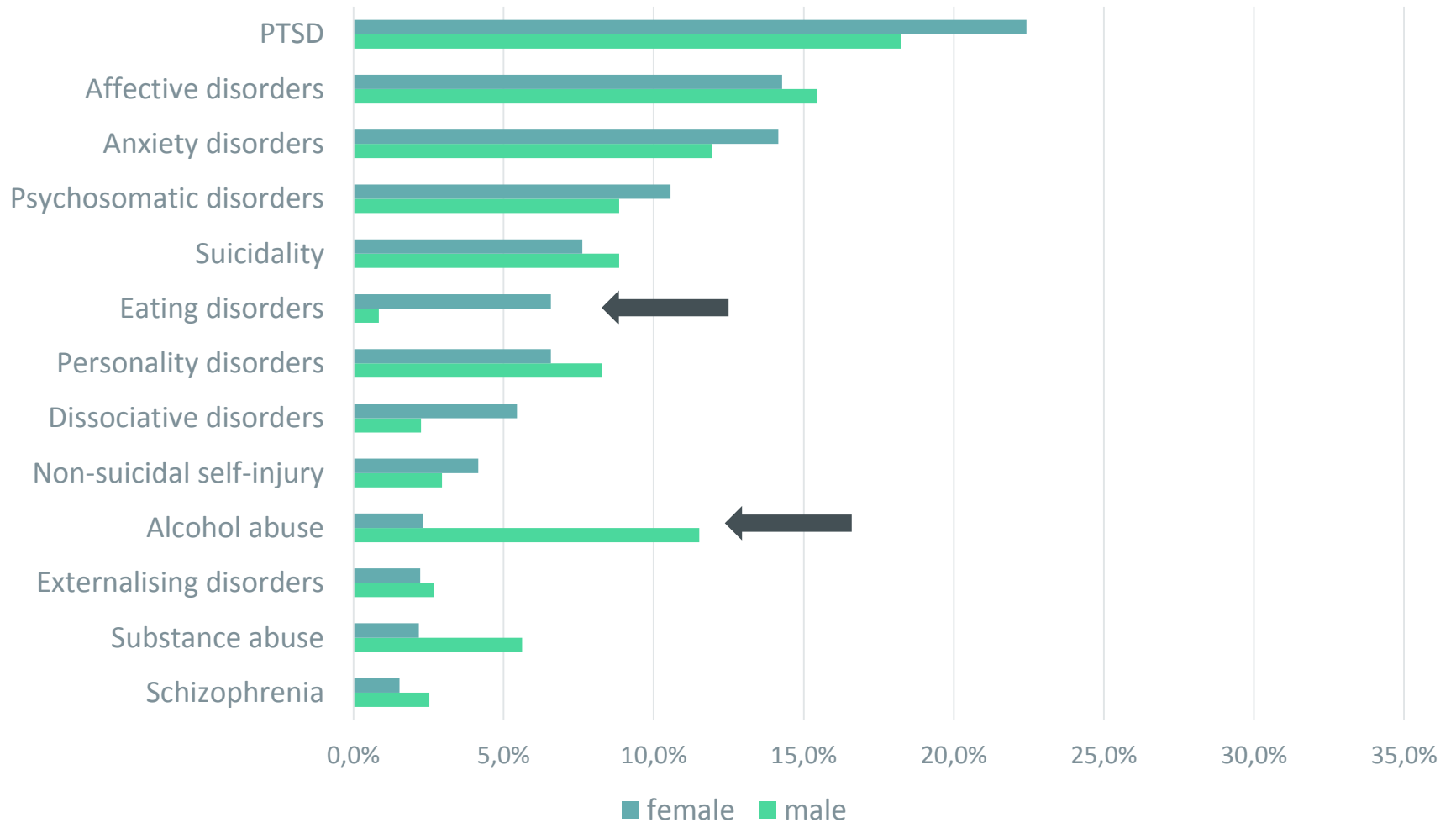


Frequency of reported diagnoses

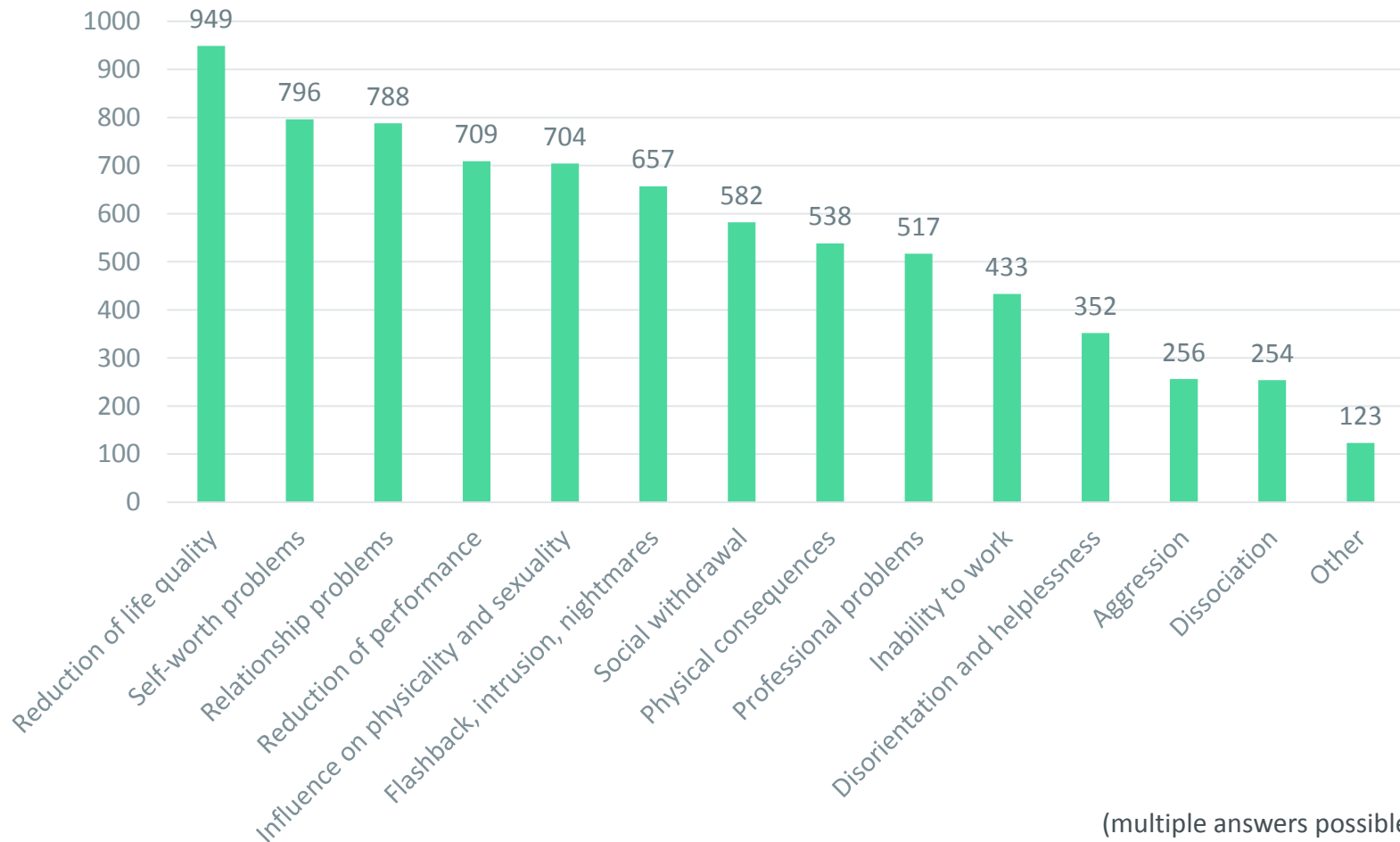


(multiple answers possible)

Gender distribution of diagnoses



Frequency of reported psychosocial difficulties and behavioral problems



(multiple answers possible)

Consequences: Narrations in the conversations

Experience of sexual abuse lasts a lifetime

- *„I really didn't know how long this terrible experience would last. I am scarred for life.“*
- *„It's been with me my whole life, left its marks on everything.“*
- *„Above all, there is this lifelong feeling of deep sadness...“*

It makes everyday life more difficult

- *„The consequences for everyday life are grave [...].“*

Daily struggle

- *„You get up every morning and you have to start fighting.“*
- *„I don't want to have to fight anymore...“*

Consequences: Narrations in the conversations

Feeling of inferiority

- „[...] *second-class people* [...]"
- „*And left me with a feeling of 'second-class' and inferiority.*"

Helplessness

- „[...] *leaves a scar of helplessness and subjection.*"
- „*I would like to feel more, above all my strength.*"

Isolation

- „*The worst and most difficult to endure is loneliness, the feeling of complete isolation.*"
- „*I've very often felt left alone.*"

Educational and professional area

„My concentration problems prevented me from graduating from high school.“

„I am not sufficiently resilient and therefore in early retirement.“

„I am intermittently incapacitated for work. It's very hard for me to be in close contact with someone – no matter with whom.“

„Due to my intense anxiety I am incapacitated for work.“

Everyday life

„I am frequently ill. This affects my life very strongly.“

„I have great difficulties with the organisation of bureaucratic paperwork and money management.“

„Due to the abuse I am not able to swim. And in my apartment I always have to close every window with roller shutters or curtains so that no one can see me.“

„I am not able to cope with my daily life on my own.“

Family, relationships, friendship

„My family didn't believe me and rejected me.“

„The disclosure was relieving and in some ways good for me. But I thereby lost several friends and was left alone with the issue of the abuse.“

„I haven't had a relationship in 20 years. I am not able to live sexuality, that's why all my relationships failed.“

- Data from a telephonic hotline with the aims of counselling as well as providing and opportunity for participation in the political and societal process
 - Highly burdened sample of victims with the experience of severe cases of sexual abuse and further maltreatment (polyvictimization)
 - Severe consequences until adulthood
 - Impairment of quality of life, psychosocial functioning, manifest psychiatric disorders resulting in concrete difficulties in different areas of life
- **lifelong burden and immense personal suffering resulting from child sexual abuse**
- **need to improve intervention and prevention strategies**

Thank you for listening.