

# Child Care and Child Sexual Abuse in Social and Human Sciences: A Narrative Review of Theoretical-Methodological Contributions for Their Understanding and Approach<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

This article presents the results of a narrative review on child care and child sexual abuse, aiming to identify and analyze the theoretical and methodological contributions of research and reports that examine the relationship between these two phenomena. Studies published between 1990 and 2023 were included in academic databases and institutional platforms of higher education. Findings were organized into five dimensions: (1) categorization, (2) historical, (3) effects on the self, (4) effects on the family, and (5) social intervention. First, the review revealed that child sexual abuse has been mainly addressed from a clinical perspective, focusing on the psychological and emotional impacts experienced by children and adolescents as direct victims. Second, a historical dimension was identified, highlighting changes in how abuse is understood and addressed.

A third dimension refers to the effects on the self, emphasizing the repercussions in the « narrative self » of victims. Next, it was observed that the family dimension has not been explored with the same depth, particularly regarding caregivers' experiences, who are considered secondary victims. This omission is critical, as their involvement is fundamental to emotional reparation and justice. Finally, the study concludes that it is imperative to incorporate feminist epistemology and a cultural, psychological perspective to understand and address, both research and social intervention, the factors that facilitate and legitimize child sexual abuse, as well as care practices.

**Keywords:** Child sexual abuse; Child care; Narratives; Women.

# Cuidado y Abuso Sexual Infantil en Ciencias Sociales y Humanas: revisión narrativa de los aportes teórico-metodológicos para su comprensión y abordaje

## Resumen

Este artículo expone los resultados de una revisión narrativa acerca del cuidado infantil y el abuso sexual infantil, con el objetivo de identificar y analizar los aportes teóricos y metodológicos de investigaciones e informes que estudian la relación entre ambos fenómenos. Se incluyeron publicaciones entre 1990 y 2023 de bases de datos académicas y plataformas institucionales de educación superior. Los hallazgos se organizaron en cinco dimensiones: (1) categorización, (2) historia, (3) efectos en el sí mismo, (4) efectos en la familia y (5) intervención social. En primer lugar, se identificó que el abuso sexual infantil ha sido mayormente abordado desde perspectivas clínicas, centradas en los impactos psicológicos y emocionales que experimentan niños, niñas y adolescentes como víctimas directas. En segundo lugar, se reconoció una dimensión histórica que evidencia cambios en el tiempo en la manera de concebir y abordar el abuso.

Una tercera dimensión alude a los efectos en el sí mismo, destacando las repercusiones en el “yo narrativo” de las víctimas. A continuación, se observó que la dimensión familiar no ha sido explorada con la misma profundidad, en particular, las experiencias de las personas cuidadoras, consideradas víctimas secundarias. Esta omisión resulta crítica, dado que su participación es fundamental en los procesos de reparación emocional y justicia. Finalmente, el estudio concluye que es imprescindible incorporar la epistemología feminista y la perspectiva psicocultural para comprender y abordar, tanto en investigación como en intervención social, los factores que propician y legitiman el abuso sexual infantil y las prácticas relativas al cuidado.

**Palabras clave:** Abuso sexual infantil; Cuidado del niño; Narrativas; Mujer.

**Summary:** 1. Introduction, 2. Methodology, 3. Findings, 3.1. The categorization dimension in CSA, 3.2 The historical dimension in CSA, 3.3 Dimension of effects on the self-related to CSA, 3.4 Dimension of effects on family dynamics associated with CSA, 3.5 Dimension of social intervention with victims of CSA, 4. Conclusions, 5. Bibliographic references.



## 1. Introduction

Theoretical and methodological approaches to Child Sexual Abuse<sup>2</sup> Started developing in Europe in the mid-1960s, sprouting relevant academic literature in the 1970s. This tendency extended to South America in the 80s, with Argentina as a pioneer (Teubal, 2010). These investigations revealed several situations in which different actors subjected children and adolescents to violations of their rights, the most recurring ones being: physical punishment from primary or secondary caregivers as a means to educate and promote discipline, followed by sexual abuse, abandonment and, lastly, economic exploitation through child labor, causing severe affectations to their development and dignity (Flores *et al.*, 2018).

This academic context grounds the understanding of how, according to specialized literature and institutional statistics on CSA, this type of violence affects directly and systematically the female gender, with the male gender as the primary aggressor (Ramírez-González, 2023). According to Hooper (1992), CSA is a consequence of a patriarchal system that legitimates asymmetric relations between genders and the abuse of power over feminine bodies, even blaming them for the violence they suffered.

We turn to Flores *et al.* (2018) to account for the previous affirmations. The researchers posit that in every country between 10% to 36% of women have been the object of physical and sexual violence, generally, between 70% or 80% of those were victims of sexual abuse during their childhood or adolescence; in contrast, men appear as principal aggressors, who frequently share a home with the victims, given that the majority of the former are close relatives or direct guardians of the latter.

According to statistics of the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (ICBF), we can confirm the presented tendency, because these data show that in the period between 2013 to 2023 the main reason for the entrance of children and adolescents into the protection system was CSA, being represented by 133.892 children and adolescents, of which 85% correspond to the feminine gender and the remaining 15% to masculine victims (Observatorio del Bienestar de la Niñez, 2023).

Regarding the Department of Valle del Cauca region, 11.874 cases entered the system in the same period. In these cases, respondents perceive the same percentage for the victim's gender. It is important to note that these cases include only the victims who decided to initiate the child protection protocol; therefore, they had access to guidance and counseling from the protection services. This implies the existence of other cases where victims chose to stay silent, causing an underreporting of the phenomenon (Observatorio del Bienestar de la Niñez, 2023).

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<sup>2</sup> We abbreviate this category as CSA and use this abbreviation throughout the document.

Furthermore, the Office of the Attorney General (Fiscalía General de la Nación 2024) reports on their institutional open data platform, that between the years 2010 and 2020 316.917 cases of sexual assault involving penetration on children under 14 years old, 86% of these were committed against girls and adolescent women by perpetrators who were primarily men and part of their family group.

Consequently, it is crucial to continue the development of research on CSA due to various fundamental reasons. First, it is essential to execute academic studies that delve deeper into understanding this issue, intervention, and visibility, given its high complexity and occurrence. Second, it is imperative to include feminist epistemology in the approaches of the aforementioned phenomenon and those associated to it; for instance, the role that women caregivers occupy when CSA happens, because according to the identified and analyzed studies and our own experiences in social intervention with families, this type of violence not only affects the direct victim, but also their family and community, being represented in its majority by women; by mothers, grandmothers and aunts who assume care and protection full time. Finally, it is urgent to investigate further the cultural elements that reproduce and legitimize this violence in everyday life.

The team undertook a narrative review process to answer an initial question: What has been the theoretical and methodological development of the approaches to CSA and its relation with women caregivers in Social Studies and the Humanities? In turn, the research team connects this question with a more in-depth inquiry developed within the context of a Master's investigation: Another document will address how the narratives about CSA constructed by women caregivers shape the nurturing of children and adolescents when someone discloses CSA. The following sections present the methodological elements we considered to answer the initial question.

## 2. Methodology

The research team developed this narrative review using the principles of qualitative investigation, from the standpoint of a historical-hermeneutical paradigm, i.e., 1. There is no inclination to use statistical data for generalizations, 2. The focus is on what is narrated, written, and the meanings that lie and emerge from within it 3. The researchers recognize the data's ontological, epistemic, political, and ethical position and the interpretation of those who execute the investigation (Cifuentes-Gil, 2011; Hernández-Sampieri *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, the objectives set for the investigation are to: a) identify and b) narratively analyze the theoretical and methodological contributions of research related to CSA and child protection.

It is appropriate to mention that we considered the definition of narrative review constructed by Snyder (2019), who posits that said exercise synthesizes the existing literature to provide an integral and critical vision over a specific subject. This allowed us to identify patterns, emerging topics, and absences in the studies, without focusing on statistical data, generalizing

human experience, but rather in the underlying and emerging senses of the examined texts, observing what is singular to them.

We searched, read, and selected the literature to answer the first objective. 55 The research team chose the investigations, considering the defined criteria:

- **Years of validity:** Initially, scholarship suggests a limit of 5 years for the identification, but the difficulty in locating documents within this period forced the researchers to expand it to 10 or more years, allowing for the finding of key elements.
- **Consulted databases:** The exploration was done, in the majority, on the following platforms: Redalyc, Ebsco, Scielo, APA PsyArticles, Gender Studies Database, Jstor, Digital Library of the Universidad del Valle, and Centro de Documentación de la Escuela de Trabajo Social y Desarrollo Humano. Secondly, we considered relevant platforms and journals on family and car studies in the Latin American region and the country: Clasco Network of Digital Libraries, Prospectiva Journal, and the Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios de Familia journal.
- **Keywords or thesaurus:** We found the following keywords not only on search engines and thesaurus but in the body of the texts under the same denomination as well: "violencia sexual," "abuso sexual infantil," "narrativas," "cuidado del niño," "mujer," "mujeres cuidadoras," "women," "narratives," "child sexual abuse," "care,"

Some combinations we used in order to search more thoroughly were:

"abuso sexual infantil" AND "narrativas"  
 "abuso sexual infantil" AND "narrativas" AND "cuidado del niño"  
 "abuso sexual infantil" AND "mujer" OR "mujeres cuidadoras"  
 "child abuse sexual" AND "women"  
 "child abuse sexual" AND "women" AND "care"  
 "child abuse sexual" AND "women" AND "care" AND "narratives"

- **Language diversity:** We researched in 4 languages: Spanish, Portuguese, French, and English.

In parallel, we constructed an Excel matrix that permitted the organization, synthesis of key elements, and dialogue between the selected texts, facilitating the process of narrative analysis *a posteriori*. The research team designed the matrix following the example of a doctoral thesis, shared by one of the authors, PhD Ocampo-Cepeda (2021). This step allowed us to move forward to the second objective, which is associated with the narrative analysis of the gathered information. The Findings section will reveal this information.

The research team selected studies from different continents, nations, contexts, cultures, and political views. We did not establish territorial demarcation as a criterion. In Table 1, we observe that most of the investigations (43) are located on the American continent, composed of South America, Central America, and North America. After those, we find Europe (8) and Asia (1).

**Table 1. We summarized the territories where we found studies concerning the subject.**

Continents	Countries	No. Of studies
<b>America: South America</b>	Colombia	12
	Argentina	6
	Brazil	5
	Chile	4
	Uruguay	1
<b>America: Central America</b>	Cuba	1
<b>America: North America</b>	United States	9
	Canada	2
	Mexico	4
<b>Europe</b>	Spain	5
	England	3
	Germany	1
	Netherlands	1
<b>Asia</b>	Pakistan	1
<b>3 continents</b>	15 countries	55 documents

Source: own elaboration.

In addition, the investigations stem from different disciplines, including psychology, social work, sociology, law, nursing, and interdisciplinary studies. Starting from this analysis, we identified three relevant elements: one, an emphasis on CSA and care, which we can find in the first two disciplines; Two, we found research executed by interdisciplinary teams addressing perspectives such as victimology, family studies, and justice studies. Three, we observed an absence in the studies of the psycho-cultural perspective, gender, and or feminist epistemology point of view, which revealed a significant distancing from the investigation question that follows this inquiry. In addition to territories and disciplines, we also found a typology in the consulted documents: Scientific papers (48), Undergraduate thesis (4), Master's and PhD thesis (2), Book (1).

At this point, it is important to highlight that the methodological designs chosen by the authors for their investigations allowed us to perceive the three kinds of recognized designs: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed. A relevant aspect to emphasize is that the main participants of these studies were children and adolescents, followed by adults who were victims of CSA.

The qualitative design methods were privileged: document analysis, systematic review, demonstrated theory, ethnography, and clinical case studies; the same for the following techniques: Semi-structured interviews, memoirs, focus groups, and projective activities.

Likewise, these qualitative studies prioritized primary sources, that is, victims of CSA. However, we located that some authors resumed the use of technical, reflexive, and clinical documents of psychoanalytic therapy, judicial processes, and processes of psychosocial assistance. Regarding the variety of analyses, those on topic and category were privileged compared to the narrative ones. We found only one study that comes close to the narrative proposal elaborated by Betancourt-Maldonado (2016).

As for the quantitative design, the studies were based on the application of psychometric tests: scales, assessments, evaluations, questionnaires and surveys related to the effects of CSA, attachment and resilience levels in victims, for which we showcase the studies of Moehler *et al.* (2007), Pereda and Sicilia (2017) and Higareda-Almaraz *et al.* (2011). Regarding the type of analysis, we observed that statistical analysis was carried out, based on tests to organize data validity: chi2 test, Tstudent, and Anova.

Concerning the diversity of designs, we considered it appropriate to present the verbs identified within the objectives of the research, which guided the purposes of the authors:

- **Qualitative:** Describe, explore, analyze, know, present, enquire. The verb “understand” was used in two of the consulted investigations.
- **Quantitative:** Determine, verify, establish, examine, assess.

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In summary, we found tremendous diversity among the objectives, methodologies, and types of participants of the selected literature, which proves ontological, epistemic, and political perspectives singular to specific historical and socio-cultural contexts. This presents an opportunity for contribution due to the vacancy regarding the complexity of the topics and the absence of it in investigations of feminist epistemology and cultural psychology perspectives.

### 3. Findings

Instead of the information presented above, we share the findings of the narrative review, organized in (5) dimensions that group together the meanings and senses related to CSA and care: 1. Categorization of CSA, 2. Historical dimension of CSA, 3. Effects of CSA on the self, 4. Effects on family dynamics related to CSA, y 5. Social intervention with victims of CSA.

#### 3.1 Categorization of CSA

Most scholars refer to CSA as synonymous with sexual violence or as if the first were part of the second. However, it is fundamental to distinguish CSA from sexual violence, because the confusion tends to erase childhood and adolescence, the havoc it wreaks on the psychosocial development, and the impact it has on caregivers and guardians. The lack of differentiation

affects the understanding of CSA and its implications for the study and intervention, restricting the creation of specific strategies to prevent and approach it.

Galaviz-Armenta (2021), Moloeznik and Portilla-Tinajero (2021), Espinosa-Luna (2019) and Fuentes-Vásquez (2019) found through their research intertwined elements between the two categories, showcasing that both are of academic interest for Social Studies and the Humanities, whose investigations have emphasized the description, explanation, understanding of origins, causes and effects and actions necessary for the prevention, attention and mitigation of these kinds of violence.

Another element referred to by the cited authors relates to the claim that there are some aspects in culture that legitimate, sustain, and promote sexual violence and SCA, social constructions configured by each territory and historical moment, not being instinctive or irrational matters at all. In conclusion, Galaviz-Armenta (2021), based on the proposals done by Butler (2006), holds that violence is a deliberate action that takes "humanity" away from the victim, given that the perpetrator decides on their life, denying their face, voice, desire, and agency.

Following this train of thought, the category of CSA can contribute to the Social Studies and the Humanities by emphasizing children and adolescents. Although this category fits into the broader connotations of sexual violence, Adults specifically inflict CSA on people younger than 18 years old, who are in a particular moment of their human development, where the trauma generated by this violence has particular implications for their becoming subjects of rights and development of personality. Thus, it is relevant to delineate the relevance of this concept in the visibilization of those who suffer from it and the singular effects it has depending on the particular moment of their lives they find themselves in.

Next, we share some of the definitions of CSA we consider relevant. CSA refers exclusively to abusive actions directed towards children and adolescents, affecting their lives on an individual, family, and community level. This denigrating practice implies a clear imbalance in power and strength, robbing the victim of their choice capacity (Hooper, 1992; Stupiggia, 2007). It is not limited to penetration, but extends to seduction and the sexual act itself. Institutional statistics and scholarship prove that most of these cases happen to the victims in their immediate family or social circle.

Orjuela and Rodríguez (2012, cited by Franco *et al.*, 2021) share the meaning of CSA in their research:

The transgression of intimate and personal boundaries of the child, male or female. It implies the imposition of sexual behavior by a person (adult or underage) on a boy or a girl in a context of asymmetry of power, usually through deception, force, use of lies or manipulation It can

include sexual contact, although behavior without direct contact such as exhibitionism, grooming, exposing children to pornographic material or the use or manipulation of children into the production of visual material of sexual content. (p. 440)

In addition, the consulted literature points out that every situation of CSA causes a reconfiguration of the victim's "narrative self" and what their caregivers represent, leading to ruptures or changes in family dynamics. A relevant aspect to highlight relates to the conclusions of some scholars that expose the absence of the question about the place that holds those who care for boys, girls, and adolescents when they disclose being victims of CSA. It is necessary to investigate this due to academic curiosity and to contribute key elements in the intervention processes to the different levels of affectation in the presented victims.

A significant detail to underline follows the research by Franco *et al.* (2021). Tkach *et al.* (2012) posit that when there is no acknowledgment by the victims themselves of their abuse (given that their research included caregivers who were victims of abuse in their childhood or adolescence), implications arise concerning the care and protection of the children and adolescents in their care. Sometimes, caregivers are unable to register or attend to their situations of sexual abuse because of the absence of awareness and elaboration of their abuse, which is deeply troubling for both victims.

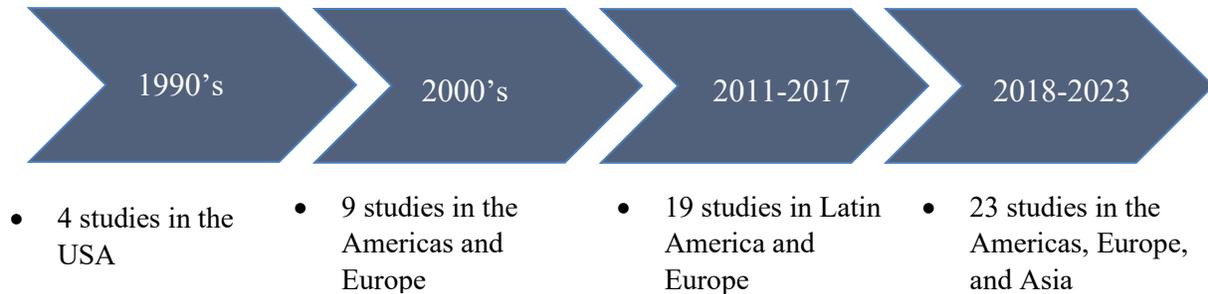
We can assert, then, that the categorization of CSA, a widely studied phenomenon during the last decades, not only by scholarship but by both government and non-government organizations, is of challenging comprehension, due to its complexity, normalization, and effects on victims. The damage it causes to confidence, the fear, and the silencing open a breach to assess the situation appropriately.

### 3.2 Historical dimension of CSA

From a historical perspective, as is mentioned by Segato (2003), "rape (in this text CSA) has (always) accompanied societies throughout ages with the most diverse political regimes and conditions of existence" (p. 26), i.e., this phenomenon has always existed. In line with this claim, we have identified a tendency among the studied literature concerning their writing and publishing timeframes. In Figure 1, we can observe a significant increase in the theoretical development since 2011 to the present day, surely associated with the advancement in legislation, programs, and politics for prevention and attention to sexual violence and CSA. The mobilization, advocacy, and incidence in favor of the rights of children and adolescents, pushed forward by a variety of government and non-government organizations in protection services, have partially contributed to the inquiry about the meaning of CSA and the need for addressing it in order to guarantee the physical, emotional, and psychological wellbeing of human beings. (Flores *et al.*, 2018; Teubal, 2010; Tkach *et al.* (2012)). In this process, families have played a central role in

preventing and repairing damages through community initiatives in alliance with the previously mentioned organizations.

**Figure 1. Timeline of the found literature concerning care and CSA.**



Source: own elaboration.

Second-Wave feminist movements during the 60s also supported research on CSA, which was very critical of both public and private spheres of life, one of these being academia and, particularly, Social Studies and the Humanities, addressing these questions over what happens to women in current societies (Motta-González, 2015). In this narrative review exercise, we found that some studies present an androcentric bias concerning the life courses of feminine bodies and identities.

On this regard, Scott (2011, cited by Motta-González (2015) holds that positioning a gender perspective and/or feminist epistemology as an ontological, ethical, epistemic and methodological standpoint calls out scholarship to “revise the epistemic status of binary values, deconstruct a system of socio-cultural domination that visibilizes women as historical agents and social subjects” (p. 114). These perspectives open the possibility for "working intersectionality, that is, to consider the cultural identities, identities of gender, race, social class, age, and different patriarchal practices and ideologies" (Suárez-Navaz & Hernández-Castillo, 2008, p. 11). The latter is essential to the understanding, approach, and visibility of CSA because the majority of the victims are female children and adolescents. It is not possible, then, to analyze and approach CSA without recognition of the constitutive elements of the victims that place them in the intersection of different types of oppression.

### 3.3 Dimension of effects on the self-related to CSA

Researchers have conducted most of the studies on CSA that I have presented and will share next, have guided their inquiries and objectives to the understanding of the traumatic effects of this type of violence on the self of children and adolescents; their conclusions present suggestions to prevent and mitigate the effects of CSA. In this sense, researchers note the recurring traumatic effects on the individual self: loss of control of the individual over their life, psychological trauma,

mistrust, disarticulation of the ego from the body, its relation to the self and reality; issues with sexuality and pleasure. Psychiatric disorders associated with CSA are: oppositional defiant disorder, anxiety disorder, ADHD, depression, phobias, intellectual and social deficits. Alterations in sleep, such as nightmares or insomnia, can also be observed. (Franco *et al.*, 2021; Stupiggia, 2007).

According to Quintero-Hernández (2019) and Flores *et al.* (2018), CSA affects the victim not only during childhood, but it wreaks havoc in adulthood as well. It is not unusual for psychological symptoms to intensify or for disclosures to occur during adulthood. Quintero-Hernández (2019) claims that victims of CSA construct, through socialization, an image of themselves full of "worthlessness, devaluation, self-contempt, unworthiness, and impurity" (p. 204). Identifying a study that holds a dialogue with this research was interesting. Browne (1993) focuses on homeless women in the United States, who, in the majority, had suffered sexual abuse during their childhood, which counts as a significant risk factor for their homelessness, due to narratives about themselves similar to those referred to by Quintero-Hernández's (2019) research. A question arises: Can we directly link a narrative of worthlessness to the narratives of vulnerability that Browne (1993) identifies for homeless women?

On the other hand, Zambrano-Quinde *et al.* (2016) claim that, if not addressed, the traumatic effects of CSA on adults can generate intergenerational abusive practices in their families. In other words, these "unresolved situations" function as inter-generational unsettled matters and are repeated, inadvertently by some people, violently in others, and are experienced as everyday occurrences" (Zambrano-Quinde *et al.*, 2016, p. 117). The former shows that when people do not address the trauma caused by CSA, this situation causes people to transmit practices and patterns that can become risk factors that make it more likely for parents to perpetrate this type of violence against their offspring. An aspect closely related to this is secrecy, which confuses and disorients people in decision-making.

Another key element refers to what Flores *et al.* (2018) conclude in their study on CSA approaches: the authors claim that research must stem from a cultural perspective. We understand this as a global public health phenomenon that requires a sensitive and contextualized perspective. For this, the authors suggest the following research lines to continue the investigation:

(...) i) the re-signification of trauma, ii) identification with the aggressor, iii) the study of the perpetrator, iv) the design of tools for identification and early approach to CSA, and v) the contextualization of the phenomenon within each social and cultural reality. (Flores *et al.*, 2018, p. 462)

Finally, it is worth mentioning that Hooper (1992) and Franco *et al.* (2021) coined a relevant term for referring to caregivers. Families raise awareness of the traumatic effects they experience

when their sons, daughters, children, or adolescents in their care disclose CSA. The term in question is "secondary victim". The presented exposition raises a question in the debate about CSA concerning the place that caregivers hold, the effects on their mental health, and the need for counseling them in order to strengthen care practices offered to children and adolescents.

### 3.4 Dimension of effects on family dynamics associated with CSA

Family still represents a significant support network when facing CSA, ameliorating its traumatic effects and repairing some of the damage it causes. Depending on how this group takes on the responsibility of this situation, the child or adolescent will be able to move forward in their disclosure, report it, and enter psychological assistance processes, or will be impaired to undertake them (González-Bedoya and Caro-Silva, 2014; Guzmán-Díaz and Trujano-Ruiz, 2020; Santos and Dell'Aglio, 2010; Teubal, 2010; Zambrano-Quinde *et al.*, 2016). Garaventa (2015, cited by Franco *et al.* (2021) refers that discrediting and silencing the narratives given by victims during their initial disclosure of CSA have, in turn, traumatic effects not only on the individual, but on their family too. To discredit the victim's narratives denies their right to narrate their own story, condemning them to silence and stripping them of the opportunities to rewrite their destiny.

Regarding that, we can assert that an aspect related to silencing or discrediting is associated with low recognition by caregivers of their abuse during childhood or adolescence; this has been one of the conclusions found in the studies by Franco *et al.* (2021) and Sanhueza-Díaz (2022). This creates implications for care and protection of children and adolescents; for this reason, Franco *et al.* (2021), Flores *et al.* (2018) and Maida *et al.* (2005) mention that intergenerational aspects of CSA on families must be identified as thoroughly as possible and provide assistance for the trauma of the caregivers, enabling the processes of those in their care to be handled in a relevant and timely manner, mitigating adversities in adulthood for recent victims.

Considering the aforementioned, we managed to identify how some research and field experiences implicitly blame women caregivers when CSA happens. This is because the studies speak of them as women responsible for caring, protecting, and guaranteeing a safe environment for children and adolescents. So, carers perceive the disclosure of CSA as evidence of their failure as caregivers. For this reason, there is evidence of how feminine identities carry a heavy burden: overload in care responsibilities and unprecedented blaming. Quintero-Hernández (2019) posits that it is important to identify the dominant narratives of women who live with CSA to recognize beliefs, cultural, social, and family practices that oppress women and legitimate these situations, which affect the life trajectory and development of people and future generations.

Meanwhile, Villanueva-Sarmiento (2013) in their study on risk factors of incest, taking into consideration the perpetrator and their family, encountered a "intergenerational repetition of previous abuse experiences that happened during childhood" (p. 452). Besides, they conclude that "mothers who are part of incestuous interactions family-systems are characterized by being

absent, diminishing their perceptions, shielding with self-justification and prioritizing formal family cohesion" (p. 457). These claims dismiss the dominant narratives about gender and care, which, far from being neutral, work as mechanisms for the normalization and legitimization of sexual violence, CSA, and the configuration of violent and unequal relationships (Baril & Tourigny, 2016; Reyes-Romero, 2020).

Teubal (2010) shares relevant ideas associated with the dominant beliefs about CSA, which show mothers not as protectors, dismissing the CSA disclosure's impact on them. Generally, women listen to CSA disclosures for the first time. Sadly, they are considered accomplices first, not as protectors, but as responsible for the situation, and very few times are they treated as secondary victims. According to Teubal (2010), a protective response from a caregiver in cases of CSA can determine a positive recovery of the child or adolescent. This is why the crisis that happens to the caregiver is that we have to address CSA when victims disclose it. Regarding social intervention, we must strengthen the support network of these women. Professionals must also assist them with a psycho-cultural and care perspective.

Pereda and Sicilia (2017) also claim that a significant role must be given to caregivers in intervention processes, assisting them in the elaboration of the trauma caused by CSA, be it experienced by themselves during childhood or adolescence, or by a child or adolescent in their care. We must support the family group, specially those who assist and receive the disclosures, because there are plenty of ways to "react" which can cause harmful actions prevent the child or adolescent from moving forward in their therapeutic process regarding CSA; The following fragment exemplifies this: "the response that a victim of sexual abuse receives from their environment after the disclosure is relevant for their psychological wellbeing" (p. 135). Moehler *et al.* (2007) mention that, according to their research, caregivers must be emotionally available to assist in CSA attention, once more showing the relevance of supporting them.

González-Bedoya and Caro-Silva (2014) refer that biographical event in family narratives do not present a specific causality of the intergenerational aspect of CSA; they do, however, demonstrate how the meaning that the family has built upon this type of violence causes a particular way of handling the situation when it happens within the family group. For instance, cultural aspects slip through the narratives of CSA experiences, the role of the State and the law in it, and the perspective assumed by caregivers. Conversely, Morillo *et al.* (2012) point to the normalization of CSA, which leads to the belief that it does not affect childhood and adolescent development; since it is such a recurring event and there is so much silence surrounding it, many people see it as a problem with minimal impact that must be dealt with privately.

In addition, Flores *et al.* (2018) and Betancur-Sánchez and Ortiz-Mejía (2020) mention two types of contexts where CSA happens: intrafamiliar and extrafamiliar. Most of the time, CSA happens in an intrafamiliar context. When it happens, the disclosure is usually delayed or avoided, given the "secrecy" taboo placed upon it and the emotional and psychological abuse

from the aggressor to the child or adolescent. Following Hershkowitz *et al.* (2007), the caregivers' reactions are an important turning point for the victims to disclose, continue, or reconsider the disclosure of CSA, especially in this specific context.

As for the extrafamilial context, García-Peña and Peña-Londoño (2018) claim that there are direct implications for the parents or guardians as well as at an individual level; this affects the protection they can provide to the children or adolescents in their care and the ability they have to deal with the situation. We cannot dismiss the extrafamilial effects of CSA, just as the intrafamilial effects, for they cause confusing emotions in the caregivers, such as rage, sadness, frustration, disbelief, or fear, making it difficult for them to assume their parental roles.

Other findings related to CSA in family dynamics link it to some family members' roles regarding CSA and care. One of these concerns the proposals by Fitzgerald *et al.* (2008), who account for a category never considered in the historical records consulted for this research, "parentification". This term refers to when a child or adolescent assumes care of their siblings, due to the absence of an emotional care figure by their primary caregivers. Older siblings care for, protect, and educate their younger siblings. This situation increases the risk of CSA. Research conducted by Chagnon (2014) sheds light on the issue of adolescent sex offenders, as these particular cases are worthy of further investigation because they represent abusive sexual relations among peers that, according to the author, are closely linked to cultural and social aspects that promote this kind of behavior. Does parentification affect this phenomenon?

### 3.5 Dimension of social intervention with victims of CSA

A certain number of studies have focused on exploring the interventions done by psychology professionals to children and adolescents' victims of CSA and their caregivers, these are: Santos and Dell'Aglio (2010), Sparks and Stoppa (2022), and Cantón-Cortés and Cortés (2015). As one of their findings, the investigations showcase the importance of supporting and accompanying the family group when CSA is disclosed, especially in early crisis intervention and case monitoring during the legal and psychosocial process.

Generally, it is the victims' mothers who care for them, due to society's feminization mandates and the familiarization of care. For this reason, it is necessary to support them (Betancourt-Maldonado & Escobar-Serrano, 2016). Álvarez-Zavala *et al.* (2012) and Pedroso-Bastos and Fortunato-Costa (2021) agree on this, given that this support strengthens those who care in their processes, impacting those of their children. Results identified significant changes in them, accompanied by a sensation of reparation.

Nevertheless, the researchers claim that the radius of social intervention about the victim and their mother must widen the support network, as the mother is a secondary victim. Pegueroles-Encina and Peralta-Barría (2017) share this opinion, manifesting that incorporating

different family members into the reparation process can accelerate its advancement. By this point, it is important to mention that secondary victimhood can present itself in two ways: on the one hand, in the emotional and social impact suffered by the victim's family and, on the other, in the revictimization that happens when the legal system, instead of taking action to protect CSA victims, re-ignites their feelings of helplessness and lack of control.

According to Pereda *et al.* (2021), the Barnhaus model prioritizes a superior interest in the child or adolescent, reducing the risk of secondary victimization through experts coordinated legal and interdisciplinary action. This perspective prevents the victim from reliving the traumatic experience in multiple scenarios and allows for a structured and sensitive assistance.

Conversely, Losada and Faga (2022) shed light on the relevance of narrative therapy to assist victims of CSA, because it allows the person to recognize their agency and locate the problematic situation as external to themselves. White and Epston (1993), Bruner (2003), and Payne (2002) point out that narrative therapy represents a flexible, close type of assistance that provides support for the victim. They conclude by claiming that nowadays there is an absence of data about the impact that this type of therapy can have on the assistance of victims of CSA.

In parallel, Bradbury-Jaramillo (2018) proposes support and monitoring of the institutions for child and adolescent protection who are victims of CSA, strengthening intervention from a cultural standpoint. Likewise, Higareda-Almaraz *et al.* (2011) suggest guaranteeing sexual education processes both with caregivers and children and adolescents, in order to create protective measures against CSA.

CSA impacts not only the direct victims. It can also profoundly affect the network of social links around them, especially the caregivers, primarily women. By being available to satisfy basic assistance and support needs in the development of children and adolescents throughout most of their lives, these women experience. We must not dismiss this complex process. In this sense, it is crucial to understand how the care system is affected by the context of CSA, and how those who provide care, in their role of guardians of children's rights, are excluded from intervention and support.

The Fourth World Conference on Women, celebrated by the UN in Beijing, China, in 1995, underlines the importance of eradicating the existing inequality between men and women, as well as de-normalizing and de-legitimizing the brutalizing actions towards women's bodies, a relevant proposal for today in the framework of CSA. Feminist epistemology allows for the questioning and mobilization of cultural practices and beliefs imposed by the patriarchal system that, without a doubt, normalizes and legitimizes violence and CSA. This perspective enables Social Studies and Humanities to build a critical point of view with historical, cultural, social, and political elements that permeate the narratives and practices surrounding gender and fundamental care, aiming to transform current realities of violence.

## 4. Conclusions

First, we identified a meager theoretical development on CSA related to care, addressed primarily from a psychological perspective. These topics present an interdisciplinary challenge in their understanding and intervention, due to the multitude of elements associated with them: the definition of CSA, narratives, and socio-cultural practices, gender issues, reparation, recovery, and justice processes. In this sense, a more thorough investigation into theoretical and methodological aspects is urgent to strengthen social intervention processes by professionals in social studies and the humanities who work with children, adolescents, and their families. The integral and context-guided approach to CSA is fundamental to move forward in the protection and attention of primary and secondary victims of CSA and the avoidance of future violence cases.

Secondly, we observed that the majority of research has been centered around the traumatic effects of CSA on children and adolescents, pointing to a need for further investigation of the family's and caregivers' roles, who often become secondary victims. This suggests that the support and assistance these people provide can be a decisive factor in recognition, disclosure, reporting, reparation, and recovery of the primary victims. Therefore, it is vital to have the proper guarantees for families and caregivers to provide a practical and non-revictimsizing support.

Thirdly, we highlight the importance of showcasing care labor, as well as the meanings and dynamics involved in intergenerational violence that particularly affect female children and adolescents. We consider necessary research that studies the practices and roles of care from a feminist and psycho-cultural perspective. These standpoints enable the analysis of how violence is legitimized and reproduced, the caregivers' limitations, and their cultural ingenuity for social transformation.

Finally, CSA is a public health problem that affects not only the primary victims, but their family and community environments as well. Further research must involve all social actors in strengthening public policies to prevent and eradicate CSA.

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## Author's contributions

Rita Participa Ocampo-Cepeda: conceptualization and methodology, writing (correction and review of the draft); Lady Johanna Betancourt-Maldonado: conceptualization, methodology and writing (correction and review of the draft); Lina Marcela Arana-Fajardo: conceptualization,

data curation, formal analysis, research, methodology, writing (original draft), writing (review and correction of the draft).

## Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest in the writing or publishing of this paper.

## Ethical implications

The authors declare that no ethical implications must be addressed in the writing or publication of this paper.

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