



The consequences of child sexual abuse and post-traumatic stress disorder: a study based on the film and book *Secret Affections*

The consequences of child and adolescent sexual abuse and post-traumatic stress disorder: a study based on the film and book 'afetos secretos'

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SUMMARY

Child sexual abuse is identified as one of the types of child maltreatment; any physical or psychological violence with sexual intent will be classified as abuse. This type of abuse can occur within or outside the family nucleus, and abusers often use coercion and threats, deterring the victim from revealing the incident. This causes the silence to worsen and ultimately lead to psychological consequences, such as Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). This study aims to study the presence of emotional and behavioral symptoms associated with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in victims of child sexual abuse, based on the film and book "Secret Affections," to understand how trauma impacts the victim's life. A qualitative study was conducted, selecting and analyzing scenes from the film, seeking to understand family relationships, the characteristics of the abuser, and the behaviors, thoughts, and emotions of the abused child, using Behavior Analysis and Cognitive Behavioral Theory as theoretical foundations. The results revealed that, for the most part, abuse occurs within the victim's family or social circle.

Furthermore, it was possible to observe the difficulty children have in facing this abuse, due to their vulnerability and society's lack of understanding of what is really happening. In some cases, the mothers of abuse victims demonstrated neglect toward their children, disbelieving, abandoning, or ignoring the situation. Finally, this study highlighted the importance of issues related to re-experiencing and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which significantly affect the victim's life.

Keywords: Child sexual abuse. Consequences of child sexual abuse. Film and book "Secret Affections". Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

ABSTRACT

Child and adolescent sexual abuse is identified as one of the types of child maltreatment; any physical or psychological violence with sexual intent will be classified as abuse. This type of abuse can occur both within and outside the family unit, and abusers often use coercion and threat techniques, undermining the victim's ability to summon the courage to report the incident, which intensifies the victim's silence and results in psychological consequences, such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The present study aims to examine the presence of emotional and behavioral symptoms associated with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in victims of child and adolescent sexual abuse, based on the film and book *Afetosecretos*, with the purpose of understanding how trauma impacts the victim's life. A qualitative study was conducted in which scenes from the film were selected and analyzed to understand family relationships, characteristics of the abuser, and the behaviors, thoughts, and emotions of the child experiencing abuse, based on the theoretical frameworks of Behavior Analysis and Cognitive Behavioral Theory. The results obtained revealed that, in most cases, the abuse

occurs within the victim's family circle or social environment. Furthermore, it was observed that children face significant difficulties in confronting such abuse due to their vulnerability and society's lack of understanding of what is truly happening. In some instances, the victims' mothers demonstrated negligence toward their children by disbelieving, abandoning, or ignoring the situation. Finally, the present study highlighted the importance of issues related to re-experiencing and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which significantly impact the victim's life.

Keywords: Child and adolescent sexual abuse. Consequences of child and adolescent sexual abuse. Film and book "Afetos Secretos". Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

1. INTRODUCTION

According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2016), child sexual abuse consists of the involvement of children/adolescents in sexual relations to which they have not yet have the capacity for understanding due to their stage of development, referring to any action with the intention of sexually stimulating the child or adolescent and using them to obtain sexual pleasure from one or more adults.

According to the Abrinq Foundation (2017), every four cases of sexual violence in Brazil, three occur with children or adolescents; while the WHO (2016) highlights that one in every five women were sexually abused in childhood, which is why it is assumed that the women are more likely to develop psychiatric disorders related to abuse.

For Nitschke *et al.* (2017) cited by Ferro *et al.* (2020), child sexual abuse occurs most frequently in the intra-family context, with children and adolescents being the most vulnerable victims, due to their fragility and the stage of physical and mental development in that they find themselves, constituting a traumatic experience that affects, mainly, the emotional development, causing significant damage that can last until adult life.

Castello *et al.* (2020) highlight that sexual abuse causes psychological changes in brain structures that can compromise different areas of the mind and generate consequences that go beyond the psychological and cognitive. Their impacts also reach other areas, such as: physical health problems, risky behaviors, and difficulties in establishing connections social, in addition to reducing the individual's life expectancy.

The negative repercussions of childhood sexual abuse significantly affect the the health and general development of the victim. In early childhood, the stage of formation of traits

personality traits, children who experience traumas such as sexual abuse are more susceptible to develop emotional and psychological disorders. Furthermore, it is common for these victims begin to adopt a submissive stance in interpersonal relationships.

Regarding the physical and psychological issues experienced by the victim, Florentino (2015) highlights the intense feeling of loneliness, which is related to emotional difficulties in assimilating the severity of the trauma, accompanied by feelings of betrayal, fear and guilt, which result in insecurity and low self-esteem and harms interpersonal relationships in adult life, which can the victim also presents psychological suffering with self-image disorders, associated with body figure, followed by feelings of not belonging to that body, as well as aversion and self-loathing.

According to Couto *et al.* (2017), it is possible to highlight suicidal ideation, Attention Deficit Disorder, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Dissociative Identity Disorder, the feeling of guilt, drug abuse, depression, submission, anxiety, difficulty in expressing feelings and compulsive sexual behavior as the most common repercussions common.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is defined by Monson *et al.* (2016) as "(...) occurrence of a certain type of event, of which the affected person does not recovers." The Paraná Institute of Psychiatry highlights that 75% of people who suffer abuse sexually end up developing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder up to a month after the occurrence.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) impacts mood and can result in dissociative amnesia as an attempt to avoid reliving the trauma. In addition Furthermore, it causes changes in vigilance, leading to frequent episodes of insomnia and difficulty of concentration, causing the individual to be excessively alert. Individuals with this disorder may also become highly reactive, experiencing difficulties in controlling outbursts of anger and exhibiting impulsive behavior.

It is common for a change in the social behavior of individuals to occur after sexual abuse. Recent studies have found that many victims develop side effects negative emotional states, such as constant anger and the fear of being abandoned by people of their coexistence. As most cases of abuse occur within the family, the victim You may have difficulty relating to and trusting others because you cannot feel safe.

Reichenheim *et al.* (1999) points out the difficulty of relationships and behavior manifested by aggressiveness, shyness, progressive social isolation, sleep and sleep disorders appetite and even problems in the sphere of activities, such as low social performance and intellectual.

Still on the consequences related to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Neto *et al.* (2022) reports long-term changes in the victim's brain structure, problems with physical health, development of risk behaviors and difficulties in establishing social relationships. In this context, it is important to emphasize that victims of abuse often sexual in childhood tend to make impulsive decisions, putting themselves in dangerous situations and adopting habits that are harmful to health, such as the consumption of alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs, in attempt to alleviate suffering and forget the traumas experienced.

Child and adolescent sexual abuse facilitates the emergence of psychopathologies serious, damaging the psychological, emotional and social development of the victim. According to Romaro *et al.* (2007) the effects of childhood abuse can manifest themselves in many ways, in any age of life. Day *et al.* (2003) states that this type of violence reflects consequences lasting psychological damage, which leads to devastating effects throughout the victim's life.

The immediate consequences, which can lead to pathology, are: fear and anxiety, fear of the aggressor and people of the same sex as him; psychotic symptoms that lead to hallucinations and delusions; social isolation, which causes the victim difficulty in establish bonds and relationships with other people; sleep and eating disorders, where, in addition to insomnia, there is also the risk of developing binge eating; and learning difficulties, where memory and concentration problems are affected.

The data presented above corroborate the hypothesis that sexual abuse leads to various physical, psychological and emotional disorders, triggering Attention Deficit Disorder Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The present work aimed to study child abuse based on the Analysis of Behavior and Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT), analyzing scenes from the film and book “Secret Affection”.

The film and book “Afetosecretos” were released in 2009, produced by the filmmaker and visual artist Graça Pizá and address the sexual violence experienced by children and adolescents within their homes, based on the analysis of more than 3,000 cases of family violence attended to at the clinic of the work's producer.

As specific objectives, we sought to identify psychological symptoms associated with Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), such as intrusive thoughts, nightmares, amnesia and insomnia. Assess emotional symptoms such as anxiety, guilt, shame, fear, sadness and insecurity; observe behavioral changes such as distrust, submission, fear; and reflect on ways of dealing with situations of abuse.

Another highlight is related to the creation of ways to deal with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, considering that the present work also contributed to identifying gaps in the stress caused by child and adolescent abuse, enabling the presentation of paths for future studies on child abuse based on the analysis of films.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A child is a human being in constant evolution. Experiences in the first years of life are responsible for the formation of the adult person that they will become, so it is crucial that children grow up in a healthy environment, surrounded by affection and with freedom to play, express themselves and enjoy the fantasy world they live in during their early years of life.

From conception in the womb until death, human beings experience a process characterized by constant change. This process of change, which results from the interaction between each individual's biological characteristics and the contextual factors in which they find themselves (society and culture), is called human development (Matta *et al.*, 2017, p. 2282).

It is in these first years, that is, in early childhood (a period that includes birth to 6 years of age), that the child goes through the maturation processes of the brain, acquisition of movements, development of learning capabilities and beginning of social and affective elaboration.

Your potential is developed according to experiences, positive or negative, and the stimuli she receives, mainly from her parents, relatives and caregivers. Problems serious events experienced at this stage may affect brain development in a healthy.

2.1. Child Sexual Abuse

According to Florentino (2015), child and adolescent sexual abuse constitutes one of the categories of child abuse, defined as all types of physical and/or psychological abuse, with the intention of sexual stimulation, which occurs between a child and any person who has already developed sexually. In addition to penetration and oral sex, the use of words immoral acts, fondling, presenting pornography and prostitution are also considered types of abuse. These abuses can be violent or non-violent, and when violence is used, abuse is now identified as rape.

Abuse can be defined as intra-familial, where the abusive person is known and carries some kind of emotional closeness to the victim (usually parents, stepfathers, grandfathers and uncles) or extra-familial, where the abusive person will be a stranger, not belonging to the cycle family member of the victim. Abuses labeled as intrafamilial are found to be more common and easy to happen (Florentino, 2015).

2.2. The Abusive Person ¹

According to Ferrari *et al.* (2002), children and adolescents are in the process of development, that is, they are immature in emotional and psychological terms, not having the ability to consent or fully understand what is happening in situations of abuse. The lack of maturity of these victims makes them vulnerable, as they are in a phase of growth and learning, allowing the aggressor to act through threats and/or violence, preventing the victim from having the freedom or conditions to protect themselves or react appropriately.

According to Araújo (2002), in cases of incest, the most frequent type of sexual abuse children and adolescents, in the majority (80%), the biological father, stepfather, brother, uncles and grandfathers are described as the main abusers, that is, these abuses are not committed by strangers, but by direct family members, which makes the situation even more traumatic, since the victim is raped by people she should trust. In these cases, the abuser seduces the victim with affection, violence and threats involving a person close to the child, which leads to distancing of the victim from those who are figures of trust and comfort to him/her.

This occurs when a child is sexually abused and is forced to keep it a secret.

¹ The abusive person can be male or female, in this work we will use the masculine article as this is how the material analyzed is referred to.

about what happened. This secrecy is usually achieved through threats, promises of rewards and guarantee of silence. The abusive person uses these tactics as a way of coercion, to maintain control of the situation and prevent the victim from reporting it. To ensure silence, the abusive person can convince the child that no one will believe him or her and even even make her believe that she herself is to blame for the abuse.

Keeping the abuse you are suffering secret can have devastating effects. significant in the victim's life, such as: prolonged psychological trauma, difficulty in trust and relationships, emotional and behavioral problems, difficulties in expression and communication, feelings of guilt, shame and isolation.

Sexual abuse can have serious and lasting consequences for victims, including physical, emotional, and social problems. Furthermore, abuse can distort understanding of child about healthy relationships and lead to confusion about what behaviors are suitable or not.

In Brazil, it is estimated that only 1 to 3% of sexual abuse cases lead to conviction. and arrest of the abusive person. Victims often fail to report the matter due to fear, lack of credibility in the justice system (ABRINQ, 2017) and bought silence by threats from the abusive person.

The abusive person, in most cases, is someone close to the victim, such as family members. and friends. Studies show that he/she can be married, have an education and a job, and not present characteristics of a rapist.

Sexual abuse of children and adolescents is a behavior that involves different factors. Although some studies suggest (Gonçalves, 2018; Moura, Gallio, Lima, 2019) that the environment in which the individual is inserted and the contingencies experienced can play a fundamental role in the development of this behavior.

Understanding the phenomenon of child and adolescent sexual abuse requires a critical view of the variables that influence this behavior. The behavior of Sexually abusing children and adolescents is complex and involves many variables.

Behavior Analysis suggests that this is an operant behavior, which is maintained by reinforcing consequences such as sexual pleasure, and which can be influenced by environmental variables and contingencies.

Araji and Finkelhor (1986) presented a multiple-factor model that explains the sexually abusive behavior of children and adolescents. This model includes four

types of explanations:

1. Emotional congruence: Adults who are attracted to children because of their lack of dominance, developmental delay, immaturity, low self-esteem, dominance of one trauma through repetition, identification with aggression, narcissism and socialization male for dominance.
2. Sexual arousal: Heightened arousal by children, conditioning from early childhood experiences, hormonal abnormalities, misattribution to stimulus that causes excitement, socialization through child pornography.
3. Blocks: Difficulties in relating to female adults, skills inadequate social interactions, sexual anxiety, unresolved Oedipal dynamics, disorders in adult romantic and sexual relationships, repressive norms about behavior sexual.
4. Disinhibition: Impulse disorders, senility, mental retardation, alcohol, failures in incest avoidance mechanism, stressful situations, cultural tolerance and norms patriarchal.

Finkelhor (1984) described four preconditions for abuse to occur: motivation of the abusive person, predisposing factors, factors related to externally inhibiting the child's behavior and predisposing factors.

When it comes to an abusive person and why they became one, it is necessary consider the interaction between personal characteristics, life history, context of development, relational, social, cultural and environmental factors. Understanding how these factors are related to the formation of behavior patterns seems to be a step important in preventing violence.

Sexual abuse of children and adolescents is a behavior that involves several points to be analyzed, including: environmental factors, contingencies and characteristics personal. Behavior Analysis can contribute to the understanding of this phenomenon by propose a model of multiple causality of behaviors.

2.3. The Mother and Child Sexual Abuse

Although there have been recent transformations in society, motherhood is a experience that redefines the role of women within it. The maternal figure is a symbol of

love and affection, and is responsible for mediating conflicts within the home. However, when it occurs intra-family child and adolescent sexual abuse, the maternal response is fundamental for protection of the victim.

The mother of the child who is a victim of intrafamilial sexual abuse (that which occurs within the family nucleus) is in a vulnerable situation, experiencing violence under three perspectives: as a victim, as a witness or as a perpetrator of violence.

Over the years, women have been gaining more autonomy over their bodies and the choice of motherhood, however, despite the changes, motherhood is still seen as a role filled with specific expectations about how mothers should care for their children. This suggests that although women have gained more freedom and autonomy, they still There are stereotypes and social expectations that influence how motherhood will be exercised. This can create additional pressure on mothers, who already face challenges significant in raising their children, however, in some circumstances, the institution family may fail to provide the necessary protection for its members, as established by law.

The study by Habigzang et al. (2005) revealed that the report of sexual violence was made by the victim's mother in 37.6% of cases, by the victim in 29%, by other family members in 15.1% and by institutions such as schools, hospitals, and police departments by 6.5%. However, in 61.7% of cases, someone knew about the abuse and did not report it. Mothers, siblings, and others family members were the main informants.

Although some mothers demonstrate protective behaviors, reporting and offering support after the disclosure of sexual abuse, others may remain vulnerable, resisting believing their daughters' accounts and, in some cases, remaining under control of abusers. Mothers' inability to protect children who are victims of sexual abuse can be caused by several factors, such as lack of risk perception, helplessness syndrome learned, depression and excessive concern with their own needs.

The mother's role is fundamental when it comes to child protection and reporting of abuse. However, the literature shows that mothers may have difficulty adopting a role of care and protection, especially when an abusive person is a family member or, financially speaking, the person responsible for the demands within the home. Furthermore, mothers may hesitate to report abuse for fear of threats made by the person abuser, fear of losing family or society's judgment of their performance

maternal.

According to Elliot and Carnes (2001), research shows that, even when mothers do not initially believe their daughters who suffered sexual abuse, many of them still do the same complaint. However, this does not mean that they always offer support and protection.

Maternal reactions to their daughters' sexual abuse can vary, from depression and anxiety to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. In the case of mothers who were victims of sexual abuse in childhood, they may react with intense emotional pain to the abuse of their children, feeling guilty, ashamed, and with low self-esteem. According to Cohen (1995), some mothers carry the weight of responsibility for what happened in the past, which may have generated feelings of guilt and fear of sharing their experiences of abuse. Additionally, learning submission in your family of origin may have limited your development of communication skills. As a result, they may have difficulty express yourself openly and honestly with your children, or share your feelings with them. spontaneously.

It is essential that families offer support and credibility to victims, which can contribute significantly to the reduction of symptoms and the recovery of victims.

Children who face unfavorable reactions and lack of support when reporting situations of abuse tend to experience more intense suffering. In addition, they may receive messages of guilt, not only from abusers but also from family members, which can make things worse the situation.

When the abuser is not close to the victim, it may be easier for third parties to believe the story and intervene. However, a dysfunctional family environment² without support can increase the child's vulnerability in situations of abuse, intensifying their effects.

Jonzon and Lindbland (2004) examined the dynamics of disclosure, reaction, and social support in cases of child sexual abuse and found that some women reported the abuse to an adult during childhood, while others only did so as adults. They noted that disclosure of childhood abuse did not necessarily serve as a protection mechanism for some women, who continued to suffer abuse,

² In Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, dysfunctional family relationships refer to patterns of interaction within the family that contribute to the maintenance or worsening of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors that hinder healthy development (Beck, 1997).

making them feel powerless and helpless.

These reactions were classified as positive, negative, and neutral. The responses Positive to victims of abuse presented five main characteristics, namely: indignation against the aggressor and compassion for the victim; an empathetic approach, which includes listen carefully, remain calm and accept the victim; trust the victim's narrative, recognizing your truth; active participation during the story, with encouragement to speak, offering help and support; and concrete actions to protect the victim, such as confronting the abuser, stop the abuse, or remove the abuser.

Negative reactions include: anger toward the victim and assumption of sexual interest inappropriate; behaviors that avoid the problem, such as not listening to your story or not import; doubts about the victim's history; inappropriate responses, such as not letting the victim talking or not offering help; and actions that would further affect the victim, such as abandonment.

Neutral reactions were characterized by moderate emotional responses and attitudes of disinterest or even uncertainty (ambivalent responses) to reports of abuse sexual. Ambivalent responses are marked by mixed emotions of anger, affection, and love in relation to the aggressor and uncertainty about the truth of the reports of abuse.

2.4. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a condition characterized by an abnormal and persistent response to stress that occurs with an individual after experiencing, witnessing or having been confronted with a traumatic experience that causes you to react with intense fear, such as physical or emotional abuse, sexual violence, serious accidents, natural disasters or armed conflicts (Monson *et al.*, 2016).

This condition manifests itself through symptoms that affect everyday life (constructed socially) and include the re-experience of trauma, involving intrusive memories and recurring, which can occur in the form of dreams and nightmares filled with strong feelings and associated with anguish and intense suffering. Flashbacks are included in this reliving of the trauma and are characterized by the victim's feeling of reliving the event traumatic at every moment of your life.

Avoidance behavior can also be highlighted, which will affect activities. daily routines of the victim, considering that their emotional energy becomes totally focused on



memories and feelings related to the trauma, causing great difficulty for the victim in expressing and describing their feelings about the trauma experienced. In some people, hypervigilance behavior is noted, putting the victim on constant alert, leading her to think that any environment will be a threatening and unsafe environment.

In addition to these symptoms, emotional changes such as irritability, anxiety, depression, difficulties with concentration and memory, and physical symptoms of rapid heartbeat, shortness of breath, tingling, sweating, dizziness, abdominal pain and others that accompany the memories traumatic, can also be identified.

According to Borges and Dell'Aglio (2008), the chances of an abused child developing PTSD is 20%, depression and suicide 21%, promiscuous sexual behavior 14%, maintenance of the cycle of violence 8% and deficits in academic performance 10%.

As reported by Borges and Dell'Aglio (2008), the prevalence of Attention Deficit Disorder Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in child victims of sexual abuse was 36.3%. The same authors highlight that when comparing children who were victims of physical abuse with those who were sexually abused, they have a 20% greater chance of developing Attention Deficit Disorder. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Thus, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) has become the psychological disorder most associated with child sexual abuse.

Still according to Borges and Dell'Aglio (2008), a prevalence of anxiety was found, depression and borderline personality disorder in women who have suffered sexual abuse in childhood, revealing that the consequences of childhood sexual abuse can persist throughout throughout adolescence and adulthood.

2.5. Consequences of Child Sexual Abuse

According to Ferrari (2002), the consequences of sexual abuse for children and adolescents are many and affect all aspects of life (physical, cognitive, psychological and social). Among them we can highlight: sleep and eating disorders, pregnancy, diseases sexually transmitted diseases, bruises, psychosomatic (physical) illnesses; problems of learning, lack of attention and concentration (cognitive); guilt, depression, mood disorder post-traumatic stress, low self-esteem, aggression, irritability, anxiety, fear, regressive behavior (psychological); hypersexualized behavior, isolation, self-harm, prostitution, revictimization, use/abuse of alcohol and other drugs and even suicide

(social).

2.6. Behavior Analysis and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

This work has as a theoretical basis for the analysis of the film and book “afetosecretos” Behavior Analysis and Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT).

According to Beck (1997) (classical CT), Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) (3rd and 4th generation) understands that the subject's perceptions of the world around him interfere in behaviors and emotions. For Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) the device psychological is formed by: 1) automatic thoughts, which are ways of interpreting everyday situations; 2) core beliefs, which form the basis for thoughts, emotions and behaviors and are formed from lived experiences; and 3) underlying beliefs, formed by rules, attitudes and assumptions developed throughout life (Beck, 2013).

Beliefs are developed during childhood, influencing the perception of oneself and others. world in adulthood. Therefore, abuse suffered during childhood impacts beliefs central and automatic thoughts, generating thoughts, emotions and behavior dysfunctional, which end up causing harm in adolescence and adulthood. One example of cognitive distortion that accompanies subjects who suffered abuse in childhood is catastrophizing, which is characterized by the pessimistic anticipation of the future (Gonçalves; Silva, 2018).

2.7. Dreams According to Behavior Analysis and Cognitive Therapy Behavioral (CBT)

Skinner (1974) points out that radical behaviorism does not leave aside thoughts and dreams, but he did not intend to delve into this topic.

Although dreams are a type of internal and hidden manifestation arising from perceptual responses in the absence of external stimuli, radical behaviorism sees and analyzes it like any other behavior. It will be necessary for the subject to use self-observation as a form of internal reflection, an introspection (recognition of one's own feelings, motives, intentions, desires, fears, etc.). This will observe the organism itself, a manifestation, a class of behaviors that was emitted by your body and, after that, will verbally report everything that is manifested during this observation of oneself.



The subject's organism behaves during sleep, making temporal discriminations about what will wake you up or keep you asleep and these behaviors are governed by the same laws that operate during waking life. Dreams will then be considered as a perceptive behavior that occurs during sleep and its report, which will be done in a verbal, will be described as verbal behavior, taking into account all the verbal and environmental stimuli that permeate this story.

The dream may be described or narrated, and so that the therapist can determine, together with the subject, the contingencies, it will be necessary to detect which independent variables determine the manifest events that are hidden.

According to Skinner (1974, p. 5),

Seeing in the absence of the seen is a familiar experience to all of us. We tend to act to produce stimuli that are reinforcing when seen. Seeing in the absence of the seen is dramatically exemplified in dreams during sleep. Visual stimulation exerts minimal control, and the person's history and the resulting data of deprivation and emotion have their place. Dreaming is a perceptual behavior, and the difference between waking and sleeping behavior is simply a difference in the conditions of control. (Skinner, 1974, chap. 5).

The report of a dream brought by the subject will then be considered a behavior verbal and it is up to the therapist to assist the subject so that he can use this verbal material in a to improve your self-knowledge.

According to Micheletto and Sérgio (1993, p. 19),

Self-knowledge is synonymous with consciousness, and there can be different degrees of consciousness corresponding to the quantity and types of elements involved in the description. These different degrees would have as extremes, on the one hand, behavior shaped and maintained by its immediate consequences, which would be 'not only unconscious' but also irrational, unreasonable, and unplanned; and, on the other, 'self-governance,' when 'we make our own rules and follow them.' This opens up the possibility, despite all the difficulties, of a conscious subject and, therefore, capable of being known. (Micheletto and Sérgio, 1993, p.19).

Dreams are used as a tool for therapists to help their patients get to know each other better. They are influenced by external and internal factors, which shape our behavior. When the subject dreams, he remembers, but does not understand what that dream means or why it happened, it can be said that behavior is influenced by factors that are not conscious. However, when the subject manages to understand what his dream means and why it happened, this shows that he is more aware of himself and what the influence. In this process, the therapist can help the patient understand their dreams and thus



develop better self-knowledge.

To interpret a dream, the therapist needs to observe what type of behavior he relates. This helps to understand what controls the dream, as the therapist has knowledge about what controls other similar behaviors. When analyzing the dream, the subject begins to change his relationship with behavior, moving from being controlled by external factors to be controlled by internal rules. These rules help you become more aware of their behavior and develop greater self-knowledge.

The therapist does not make a scientific analysis of behavior, but presents a possibility based on his observations. He describes possible relationships between the behavior and the factors that control it, helping the subject to better understand himself.

According to Hélio (1998, p.8),

The conceptual position defined here is that the dream is clinical material behavioral with the same status as other content brought by the client. It embeds itself in the dataset and has meaning within that context. In the same way, the therapist's interpretation of dreams has the same status as other therapeutic interventions and is incorporated into the set of interventions. (Hélio, 1998, p. 8).

Dream analysis should occur as follows:

- Dreaming is a behavior influenced by life experiences and circumstances of the individual. Dream interpretation must be personalized, considering the context of the subject's life. There are no universal answers or fixed meanings for the dreams.
- Dream interpretation helps to better understand the subject's behavior, connecting it with other behavior patterns and identifying what influences it.
- The interpretation must provide clear clues to the subject, helping to change their behavior. The therapist must place the patient under the control of rules by him formulated, the rules will appear in the form of advice, warnings or instructions, and should monitor the results of its intervention in the short and medium term, evaluating always the effectiveness of your intervention.



- Dream analysis helps the subject to know himself better. Self-awareness is influenced by culture and language, allowing us to reflect on thoughts and feelings. The development of self-awareness depends on language and interactions social.

- An individual's interpretation of their dreams reflects their degree of self-knowledge. As the therapeutic process progresses, the client improves his or her ability to understand the relationships between your thoughts, feelings and behaviors, and your dream interpretations become more accurate and connected to your real life.

Dreams can be a way of expressing ideas, feelings and fantasies that would otherwise be difficult to communicate in any other way, and may be an example of avoidance behavior. avoidance, where the subject avoids confronting unpleasant feelings or thoughts. The therapist must be sensitive and careful when analyzing dreams so as not to provoke a reaction aversive.

It is important to remember that the subject does not consciously choose how to communicate, and that dreaming behavior is controlled by contingencies, known or unknown. Furthermore, therapists can influence the subject's behavior in relation to dreams, encouraging or discouraging their expression.

The procedure adopted in therapy should follow the following presentation model:

1. The topic "Client" refers to the information collected by the therapist about the patient, including: Life history data, contingencies he responded to, current context, direct observations and reports from the subject. This information is fundamental for the dream analysis and understanding of the case.

2. The topic "Dream" refers to the report of the dream, which is heard by the therapist, who necessary, ask questions to clarify it, in addition to encouraging the subject to writing your dream.

3. The topic "Client Interpretation" involves the patient's interpretation of

to your own dream, which leads you to understand your life story and current context, in addition to assessing your level of self-knowledge and ability to self-analysis.

4. The topic "Therapist's Interpretation" involves the therapist's interpretation, together with the information given by the patient, integrating one into the other for better understanding of the subject with himself, helping to improve self-knowledge and behavior.
5. The topic "Results" refers to the changes observed in the subject, after the test has been performed. of the interpretation of the dream.

3. METHODOLOGY

Scientific research has different stages that aim to construct solid knowledge, one of the steps is the methodology.

Deslandes *et al.* (2007, p. 14) describes methodology as:

Methodology is the path of thought and practice exercised in approaching reality. In other words, the methodology simultaneously includes the theory of the approach (the method), the instruments for operationalizing knowledge (the techniques) and the creativity of the researcher (his experience, his personal capacity and his sensitivity). (Deslandes *et al.*, 2007, p. 14).

Another fundamental point in research is its social relevance, which is presented as the justification. Martins (2022) emphasizes that justifying research means demonstrating its relevance and importance, through solid arguments for its implementation, which leads to having as a basis the theoretical foundations, and objectives.

In this study, a bibliographical research was carried out that used secondary sources, such as books, academic articles, dissertations, among others, to support the analysis of the film and the book "Afetosecretos". Data analysis was carried out qualitatively, since the study analyzes human phenomena in depth and detail on the topic of abuse childish.

According to Deslandes *et al.* (2007), qualitative research answers questions



very particular, works with aspirations, beliefs, values and attitudes. According to the author, the The object of qualitative research can hardly be translated into numbers and indicators quantitative.

3.1. Materials

This research proposed to analyze the film and the book "Afetosecretos". Both were produced in 2009 by filmmaker and artist Graça Pizá and narrates the drama experienced by child and adolescent victims of sexual violence. The film and the book were analyzed using Behavior Analysis and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy as theoretical basis.

The work "Afetosecretos" presents a narrative based on clinical fragments, which reports 22 dreams of children who were victims of sexual abuse and incest (relationship with sexual practice between people who have a legal degree of kinship). These children are represented by a single female character, who suffered abuse from her father and neglect from her mother throughout her life your childhood.

Through 22 dreams, the character reveals the trauma of memories and affections associated with the event, including fear, silence, anguish, helplessness, death, guilt, rebirth and transformation. The character struggles to overcome this trauma, confronting her past and undergoing a transformation that marks the beginning of its rebirth.

When examining scenes from the film that address issues related to child abuse, relevant articles on the topic researched in the SCIELO and PEPsic databases were used.

The analysis focused on four scenes, two of which were dream narratives. scenes were chosen based on their relevance to the central theme of the study, such as: the family dynamics and the abusive person, emotions, feelings, behaviors, conflicts perceived in the child. Therefore, the scenes are fundamental to understanding the dynamics in which the child is involved in helping to understand the psychological and emotional consequences that may result from the experience of abuse.

The inclusion criteria for scenes from the film were: scenes that reveal the dynamics family and the abusive person, behaviors, thoughts and emotions of the child and adults affected by abuse. The inclusion criteria for selecting articles that were used for analysis of the scenes are: to be in the Scielo and Pepsic database and to address the topic of child abuse/violence and post-traumatic stress disorder.

The exclusion criteria for the scenes selected in the film are: scenes that do not deal with the family dynamics and the abusive person that are not related to child abuse. For the selection of articles that were used to analyze the film and the book, the ones that were excluded were materials that are not scientific articles published in the Scielo and Pepsic databases, which do not are from scientific journals and have not been published in the last ten years.

Table 1 presents the scenes and dreams that will be analyzed.

CENA	INICIO	TÉRMINO	RESUMO
Interior 1	14min37	15min31	O pai chega a noite e ela deve ser submissa e ficar parada à espera dele.
Interior 2	15min57	a 17min18	Ela deverá dormir com o pai a noite inteira e no dia seguinte deve esperar caso a vontade dele voltar.
Beladormecida	20min36	21min08	SONHO: Tava dormindo e foi beijada sentindo nojo e pavor.
Mãe-aranha	23min55	26min14	SONHO: A mãe foge e a deixa chorando.

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Two scenes and two dreams were analyzed.

3.2. Analysis Procedure

This work focused on family contexts and sought to understand the psychological impact that sexual abuse has on children, adolescents and adults. The analysis of data carried out was qualitative. As Pinto (2004) describes, the qualitative model involves a personalized and dynamic investigation process. In this way, each scene was analyzed from the thoughts, feelings and behaviors of the characters, but based on published scientific articles, since the construction of subjectivity human being must be analyzed in a particular way and within a specific theoretical system (Pinto, 2004).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed to investigate the film and book "Afetosecretos" (2009), directed by Graça Pizá, which explores the trauma experienced by children and adolescents who suffered sexual violence. The analysis was based on Behavior Analysis and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and focused on 22 dreams of child victims of sexual abuse and incest, personified by a female protagonist who experienced abuse and neglect.

Through the analysis of four scenes from the film, the themes of relationships were explored family members, emotions, perceptions, behaviors and internal conflicts experienced by children. The selection of scenes was based on inclusion criteria, such as relevance to the theme central to the study, family dynamics and the relationship between the abuser and the victim. The objective of the study is to contribute to the understanding of the psychological and emotional implications of abuse child and adolescent sexuality in adult life.

The scenes selected for analysis are the accounts of the dreams described in the book by patients who are victims of sexual abuse, which are narrated by the main character of the film in order to recreate the traumatic event and the sensations experienced by the victim. This approach allows a deeper understanding of the victims' lived experience, as well as the emotions, thoughts, and behaviors associated with this type of trauma. In addition, dream narrative by the film's main character provides a window into understanding how victims of sexual abuse process and cope with their traumatic experiences.

For behavior analysis, dreams are seen as behaviors that express how the mind works outside of conscious control. The ability to imagine things that are not present, seeing in the absence of the thing seen, is an important aspect of dreams, that are influenced by personal life, emotions and experiences. Dreaming is a form of processing information that happens both when we are awake and when we are sleeping, with the only difference being the conditions under which this happens.

Dreams are a tool for therapists to help their patients feel better. understand better. They are affected by things that happen outside and inside us, and influence our behavior. By understanding the meaning of dreams, people can become more aware of themselves and what affects them, developing their self-knowledge.

4.1. Scene 1

CENA	INICIO	TÉRMINO	RESUMO
Interior 1	14min37	15min31	O pai chega a noite e ela deve ser submissa e ficar parada à espera dele.

The first scene analyzed begins at 14 minutes and 37 seconds and ends at 15 minutes and 31 seconds.

The scene begins with the character narrating his experience of imprisonment, identified as a "prison world," where she feels forced to submit to parental abuse every night. The camera then pans to a dark room where a large number 8 is drawn on the floor. The character is shown walking on the number lines, with hands close to the body, suggesting a bodily, partial and behavioral expression that a person adopts when he is afraid.

As the scene progresses, the character begins to move away from the camera, creating an impression of diminution and shrinkage, reinforcing the feeling of vulnerability and impotence of the character.

This report is in line with what was said by Ferrari et al. (2002), who mention that children and adolescents are in a phase of development characterized by immaturity emotional and psychological, which makes them more vulnerable and susceptible to manipulation by the aggressor. This prevents these victims from fully understanding what is happening and, consequently, make it impossible for them to defend themselves or react accordingly in an appropriate manner in the face of abuse.

This scene can also be highlighted by what Araújo (2002) said, the biological father is the primarily responsible for child abuse, using threats to silence the victim and make the even more devastating situation. As a result, the victim may develop difficulties in establishing trust in relationships, presenting emotional problems and behavioral, having difficulties expressing their feelings and communicating, as well as experience feelings of guilt, shame and isolation.

According to Florentino (2015), victims of abuse face significant difficulties processing the trauma, which can trigger feelings of profound loneliness and fear. These feelings, in turn, can result in psychological symptoms such as insecurity and low self-esteem, which manifest themselves in a disturbed relationship with oneself body image.

The number 8, which resembles the infinity symbol, may represent the idea that character is trapped in an endless cycle of fear and insecurity, facing an obstacle that seems infinite and insurmountable.

4.2. Scene 2

CENA	INICIO	TÉRMINO	RESUMO
Interior 2	15min57	a 17min18	Ela deverá dormir com o pai a noite inteira e no dia seguinte deve esperar caso a vontade dele voltar.

The second scene analyzed begins at 15 minutes and 57 seconds and ends at 17 minutes and 18 seconds.

The scene features the character narrating the dark secret he shares with his father, an abuser. She recounts the pain of having to sleep with him after the abuse and yet remaining at your disposal, awaiting a possible repetition of the trauma.

Next, the character moves to a dark environment, where a large number 8 is drawn on the ground. Initially, an older character is shown walking on the number lines, representing the current character. However, the older character is replaced by a younger version, who is then observed from top to bottom by the father.

The narrative shows the trauma and pain of the character, who is forced to share a dark secret with his abusive father, as already described, reinforcing the study by Araújo (2002), which points out that child abuse often has family roots, with the biological father being the main aggressor.

To maintain control, the aggressor resorts to threats, creating an environment of fear and intimidation that intensifies the trauma. The consequences of this abuse can be devastating and lasting, affecting the victim's ability to form healthy relationships, their self-esteem and self-perception, manage your emotions and behaviors, express your feelings and communicate effectively. Furthermore, the victim may carry the burden of guilt, shame and isolation, which can sustain the cycle of abuse.

The description of the pain of having to sleep with the father after the abuse and remain at his side disposition is a clear representation of the power of control and manipulation that the person

abuser exerts on the victim, as represented when the character is observed from above down by the father, highlighting his vulnerability and powerlessness.

The change of scenery to a dark environment, marked by the presence of the number 8, symbolizes the character's imprisonment in a vicious cycle of trauma and abuse. The shape of the number 8, which resembles the infinity symbol, suggests that the character is trapped in a cycle of pain and trauma that seems to have no end.

Replacing the older character with a younger version is a representation of the impact of trauma, in addition to being one of the symptoms of Stress Disorder Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), reliving, demonstrating the idea of infinite suffering represented by the number 8. This condition manifests itself through symptoms that interfere in everyday life, where the victim relives the trauma through intrusive and recurring memories. These memories can manifest in the form of dreams and nightmares, accompanied by feelings of anguish and suffering. Flashbacks are a common feature of this condition, where the victim feels that he or she is reliving the traumatic event in the present moment, denoting endless suffering that repeats itself either in the act of abuse itself or in re-experiencing it manifested.

4.3. Dream 3

CENA	INICIO	TÉRMINO	RESUMO
Beladormecida	20min36	21min08	SONHO: Tava dormindo e foi beijada sentindo nojo e pavor.

In this context, the account of a dream, present in the book, which gave rise to the creation of the scene of the film. The third scene begins at 20 minutes and 36 seconds and ends at 21 minutes and 08 seconds.

In the dream in question, the dreamer found herself lying inside an immense snow toy, identifying with Sleeping Beauty in a state of sleep. In this context, the Prince of Darkness appears, characterized by a black cape with the appearance of wings of a bat, which moved silently. The dreamer reports that, upon coming into contact with the cloak, the Prince of Darkness kissed her, triggering a feeling of dread (as described by the character).



Behavior is determined by the environment and the consequences that follow. actions. In the context of the dream, one can analyze events as a sequence of stimuli and responses, where stimuli evoke responses that are reinforced by consequences.

The snow toy present in the dream can be characterized as a stimulus that evokes a response of helplessness in the dreamer, it can be seen as a reference that describes the feeling of loss of control and autonomy, making her feel used and handled by someone who doesn't need permission to "play" with it. This stimulus is an example of how "seeing in the absence of the thing seen" can be a powerful experience, especially in dreams.

During sleep, visual stimulation exerts minimal control, allowing the story to of the person, deprivation and emotion have an opportunity to express themselves. In this sense, the dream can be a window into the thoughts, feelings and beliefs that are contributing for your experience of powerlessness and loss of control.

Identification with Sleeping Beauty can be seen as a stimulus that evokes a vulnerable response in the dreamer. Children and adolescents are easily influenced due to their emotional and psychological immaturity, this prevents them from understand abuse and react appropriately, making them more susceptible to manipulation.

The appearance of the Prince of Darkness and his black cape with the appearance of bat wings can be seen as an aversive stimulus that triggers a fear response. Furthermore, the Prince's kiss can be interpreted as a negative reinforcement, which reinforces the response of the dreamer's dread. In this context, the Prince of Darkness can be understood as a representation of the father, who, instead of protecting Sleeping Beauty, abused her, thus inverting the expected role of savior.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can trigger a panic attack response. intense fear in victims of child sexual abuse. This occurs when they relive the trauma or are exposed to stimuli that evoke memories of the abuse. The perception of danger, even in the absence of a real threat, and the feeling of disconnection from reality can contribute to this fear response. This reaction is a characteristic symptom of Stress Disorder Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and can cause great discomfort to victims of sexual abuse children and adolescents.

4.4. Dream 4

CENA	INICIO	TÉRMINO	RESUMO
Mãe-aranha	23min55	26min14	SONHO: A mãe foge e a deixa chorando.

In this context, the account of a dream, present in the book, which gave rise to the creation of the scene of the film. The fourth scene begins at 23 minutes and 55 seconds and ends at 26 minutes and 14 seconds.

The dreamer reports that, when she went back to sleep, she saw the image of her mother trapped in a web, depicted as a spider that moved by crawling. However, the mother managed to escape and ran away without saying anything, leaving the dreamer in tears. Furthermore, he took with him a stairs, which left the dreamer with no way out.

The maternal figure plays a crucial role in protecting the child, especially when it comes to a case of abuse. However, research shows that mothers can face challenges in fulfilling their role of care and protection, especially when the abuser is someone close to you, such as a family member or financial provider. Furthermore, mothers may be reluctant to report abuse due to fear of the abuser, fear of losing their family or fear of social judgment about her maternal ability. In this context, the dream of the child, where the mother is "caught in a web", reveals a deep perception of the child about the fear and feeling of imprisonment that the mother may be experiencing.

According to Elliot and Carnes (2001), research shows that, even when mothers do not initially believe their daughters who suffered sexual abuse, many of them still do the same reporting. However, this does not mean that they always offer adequate support and protection.

Mothers who face sexual abuse from a child may experience reactions emotional problems such as depression, anxiety and even Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). In the case of a mother who was sexually abused in childhood, there may be pain intense emotional experience when dealing with the abuse of their children, carrying feelings of guilt, shame and low self-esteem.

According to Cohen (1995), some mothers may carry an emotional burden due to past experiences of abuse, which generates feelings of guilt and fear of sharing their stories. Furthermore, submission in their family of origin can limit their development of communication skills, which makes it more difficult for them to express themselves openly and honestly with your children or share your feelings in a

spontaneous. As a result, these mothers may feel overwhelmed and isolated, which leads the search for an emotional "escape", that is, a way to escape painful emotions and feelings of guilt that accompany them, as demonstrated in the dream, at the moment in which the mother escapes, without saying anything and leaving the dreamer in tears, causing a feeling of neglect and abandonment.

According to the WHO (2016), unfortunately, it is common for victims to be received with aggressiveness and questions about their integrity or assumptions that they have contributed to the abuse. Furthermore, victims are often ignored or neglected, with their reports being ignored or minimized. Distrust is also common, as many people doubt the veracity of the victim's story.

Inappropriate responses are also common, with victims being interrupted or not receiving the necessary emotional support. In some cases, the actions taken may be even more harmful, such as abandoning the victim or taking measures that worsen the situation.

5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study aimed to investigate the manifestation of emotional symptoms and behavioral symptoms related to Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in children victims of abuse, using the film and book "Secret Affection" as reference. The objective was understand how trauma affects the victim's life.

This work achieved its main and specific objective, studying the presence of emotional and behavioral symptoms associated with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in victims of child sexual abuse. Through the film and the book, it was possible bring to light, in a more tangible and impactful way, the devastating consequences that this abuse can cause in the lives of victims, demonstrating how trauma can develop, leading to the emergence of symptoms characteristic of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Furthermore, the analysis of the film and the book allowed for a deeper understanding of family dynamics and how they influence the lives of these victims.

Therefore, this work contributed significantly to a greater understanding of the consequences of child sexual abuse and the development of Stress Disorder Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), bringing to light the importance of a more sensitive and effective approach to support victims of abuse.



Child sexual abuse can contribute significantly to the development of physical, psychological and emotional disorders, which can lead to Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Victims often experience intense fear of both the abusive person and people of the same sex, which can lead to social isolation and difficulties in establishing healthy bonds. In addition, the feeling of abandonment and helplessness can be exacerbated by the absence or neglect of the maternal figure. In the film, you can see the fear demonstrated by the character when faced with the presence from the father, her abuser.

During the research, we found that child and adolescent sexual abuse is part of the categories of child abuse, both violent and non-violent, occurring in 80% of cases within the family nucleus (intra-family abuse). This reality is particularly cruel, because victims are often abused by people they should trust and care about. feel safe. The mother of a child who is the victim of intrafamilial sexual abuse may experience the violence in three ways: as victim, witness, or perpetrator. This perspective reflects directly on how the victim will face the situation.

Dreams constitute a behavioral manifestation during sleep, governed by same laws that govern waking behavior. The radical behaviorist analysis of dreams seeks to understand the subject's verbal report as a behavior influenced by environmental and verbal stimuli. The therapist can help the patient develop self-knowledge by exploring dreams as expressions of behaviors controlled by specific contingencies, identifying possible relationships between behavior and factors that determine it. In this way, dreams can be a valuable tool for understanding of oneself and behavioral change.

When starting this research, the intention was to collect testimonies from people who suffered childhood sexual abuse. However, the sensitivity of the issue and the possibility of reopen unhealed wounds. Taking into account the concern to avoid discomfort or additional suffering to the victims, the authors chose to use the film and the book as a source of information and an example of the context addressed in this work. This choice allowed a more sensitive and respectful approach to the topic, while at the same time enabled a deep understanding of the problem.

It is suggested that future research expand the study of mothers of abuse victims and understanding of abused people about them. It would also be interesting to understand the

aspects that led an abusive person to do so. It is believed that an abusive person, in its broader aspect, has also been abused, this topic would also need to be better investigated.

In conclusion, it is crucial that people better understand the problem of abuse. child and adolescent sexual abuse and how common it is, especially within the family. Education about Sexuality should be prioritized both at home and in schools to create a safe and welcoming environment where victims feel comfortable talking about abuse. It is essential inform about the different types of abuse so that victims can identify them. In addition, Furthermore, it is important to create support programs to help mothers and provide financial assistance, so that they can report abuse without fear. Finally, it is essential that people are informed about child sexual abuse so they can recognize the warning signs and act to prevent and combat this form of violence.

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