

# SEXUAL VIOLENCE RESEARCH INITIATIVE:

## *Building the evidence base in resource-poor settings*



### *What is the Sexual Violence Research Initiative?*

Sexual violence against women and children has gained increasing recognition internationally as both a public health problem and a violation of human rights. Despite its significance, sexual violence has not received adequate attention from researchers, policy makers and programme designers, particularly in developing countries.

In an effort to address this gap, the Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) was established. The SVRI uses an innovative mix of evidenced based information, communication and technology media and capacity building workshops and events to promote and build capacity in research on sexual violence globally.

Visit the SVRI at [www.svri.org](http://www.svri.org) or join our listserv at [www.svri.org/join.htm](http://www.svri.org/join.htm). You are also welcome to contact us at [svri@mrc.ac.za](mailto:svri@mrc.ac.za) for more information on this resourceful initiative.



### *SVRI aims*

The SVRI aims to promote research on sexual violence and generate empirical data that ensures sexual violence is recognised as a priority public health problem.

The SVRI does this by building an experienced and committed network of researchers, policy makers, activists and donors to ensure that the many aspects of sexual violence are addressed from the perspective of different disciplines and cultures.

### *SVRI objectives:*

- Increase awareness of sexual violence as a priority public health problem through evidence based communication and information.
- Strengthen the support and funding base for research on sexual violence.
- Build capacity in sexual violence research.
- Improve knowledge of sexual violence internationally to influence policy and service delivery.

### *Child Sexual Abuse as a Key Focus area of the SVRI*

Child Sexual Abuse is a key focus area for the SVRI. In addition to the physical and emotional hurt, Child Sexual Abuse profoundly impacts on the mental health and developmental growth of a child. Lack of data on the nature and extent of Child Sexual Abuse hampers the development of effective prevention programmes and delivery of services for Child Sexual Abuse victims/survivors. Most research on Child Sexual Abuse has to date been undertaken in developed countries settings. The applicability of these findings to less resourced settings remains unknown.

### *Capacity building:*

**The SVRI is working to build research capacity and the evidence base for Child Sexual Abuse interventions in less resourced settings. We are doing this in a variety of ways, including:**

- Identifying key focus areas for research on child sexual abuse;
- Providing a range of academic and evidence-based resources, research tools, guides and country specific information on child sexual abuse, the SVRI's Child Sexual Abuse webpage can be accessed at: <http://www.svri.org/children>;
- Building networks and encouraging information sharing through research and capacity building workshops, online discussions ([www.svri.org/forums](http://www.svri.org/forums)) and SVRI listserv;
- Ongoing engagement with SVRI membership to assist in identifying appropriate resources and materials on Child Sexual Abuse for dissemination to SVRI members and website visitors; and
- Commissioning global and regional background papers and presentations on parenting, gender socialisation and the prevention of child abuse and neglect in low- and middle-income countries.

### *Next steps for the SVRI Developing the evidence based for multi-sectoral Policy on rape prevention*

As part of a global project to develop a multi-sectoral policy on rape prevention, the SVRI with support from Oak Foundation is: commissioning a number of desk reviews on the prevention of Child Sexual Abuse; hosting a research seminar on parenting, gender socialisation and prevention of child maltreatment in low- and middle-income countries and building capacity building among researchers and dissemination of methodological experiences and research findings through the SVRI Forum 2011. Details of which are to follow:

### *Global and regional desk reviews, papers and presentations:*

- Parenting and the prevention of child maltreatment in low- and middle-income countries - A systematic review of interventions, and a discussion of prevention of the risks of future violent behaviour among boys;
- Interventions to strengthen biological or social parenting and the home setting to prevent sexual abuse of children and to influence the gender socialisation of boys;
- Vulnerability and protective factors for child sexual abuse in India and Sub-Saharan Africa; and
- Global review of interventions to prevent rape perpetration for boys and young men.



### *SVRI Research Seminar:*

The SVRI hosted a research seminar in London to present the initial findings of these reviews and papers. The seminar provided opportunity to discuss what we know about prevention of Child Sexual Abuse and parenting and home environment strengthening interventions to reduce exposure to abuse and neglect globally. The seminar aimed to identify gaps and priorities to consider for research in the area and to further inform the reviews.

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