Professionals' Perspectives about the Challenges of Using Interpreters in Child Sexual Abuse Interviews

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Interpreters play a crucial role in many investigative interviews with child complainants of sexual abuse; however, little has been written about the interpreting process from the perspective of the interviewers. This study elicited interviewers' perspectives about the challenges of using interpreters, with the aim of understanding how investigative interviews could be improved. The participants consisted of 21 investigative interviewers and prosecutors of child abuse cases (from a range of jurisdictions) who use interpreters on a regular basis. Thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with the professionals about the interpreting process revealed two main challenges particular to child abuse interviews, namely the interpreters' lack of preparedness to deal with the traumatic and sensitive nature of children's abuse histories, and an insufficient understanding of 'best-practice' child interview process. The recommendations focus on the need for more specialised training for, and screening of, interpreters, and more extensive use of pre-conferencing to familiarise children with the interpreter-mediated interview process.

Key words: child sexual abuse; courtroom; forensic; interpreters; investigative interview; interpretation; translation.

Introduction

Interviews with child witnesses form the central pillar of police investigations and criminal trials centring on alleged child sexual abuse. The process of conducting these interviews, however, can be extremely difficult. Graphic, detailed descriptions of sexual acts must be remembered with precision, and with reference to time and place (S v. R, 1989). Further, as sexual abuse is often traumatic and perpetrated by a trusted adult, the process of recounting these offences to strangers can be emotionally gruelling. Child witnesses report feelings of intense shame and embarrassment, and a host of other distressing

emotions (Bonanno et al., 2002; Hamilton, Brubacher, & Powell, 2016; Hershkowitz, Lanes, & Lamb, 2007). Given that cases of child sexual abuse suffer the lowest prosecution rates of all indictable offences (Daly & Bouhours, 2010), the focus of research in the area of child sexual abuse interviewing has been on identifying ways to maximise the amount of forensically-relevant detail needed to assist decision-makers, while minimising the secondary victim trauma arising from the investigation and trial process (Hoyano & Keenan, 2007).

In order to conduct an investigative interview about child sexual assault, specialised

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training is required to accommodate children's developing memory and language skills while ensuring a fair process for both the complainant and the accused. In situations where the child speaks a different language to that of the interviewer, the trained (authorised) interviewer still conducts the interview but arranges for a 'competent interpreter' to be present if the interviewee does not understand the interviewer's native language well enough to comprehend the questions put to him or her. Considering the high prevalence of child sexual abuse worldwide (Pereda, Guilera, Forns, & Gómez-Benito, 2009; Stoltenborgh, van IJzendoorn, Euser, & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2011) and the large proportion of children who speak English as a second language (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012), interpreter-assisted child abuse interviews are relatively common in Australia. Indeed, surveys involving legal professionals revealed that nearly half have engaged regularly in interpreter-mediated interviews and/or trial proceedings (Hale, 2011; Lee, 2009).

Research examining the use of interpreters has been conducted across a range of forensic contexts, including police and courtroom interviewing. Collectively, these studies have revealed two main challenges. One challenge relates to the limited availability of interpreters (Morris, 2008). This concern is prevalent in situations wherein the complainant is from a relatively small language group, organisational resources are limited, and interviewers are constrained to hiring interpreters from a small pool of (seemingly over-committed) agencies (Hale, 2011; Humphreys, Atkar & Baldwin, 1999). In the absence of qualified interpreters, professionals are forced to use telephone interpreting services or to adjourn or delay investigation or court proceedings until a suitable interpreter can be hired, or to use an unqualified interpreter such as a friend or family member of the interviewee (Berk-Seligson, 2000). None of these options are ideal. Compared with an interpreter in the same room, remote

interpreters make more errors in the message content (inaccuracies, omissions, additions, and coherence problems), have more linguistic and paralinguistic problems (e.g. hesitations and repetitions), and have more difficulties with turn-taking (Braun, 2013). Using untrained interpreters may undermine the usefulness or accuracy of the information obtained (Hale, 2011), and adjourning proceedings can have dire implications for the complainant's safety. For example, Morris' (2008) analysis of court cases from Canada and Israel in which interpreters were used showed that a man arrested on suspicion of domestic violence had to be released on bail as there was no interpreter available for two days.

The second common challenge of using interpreters relates to the lack of scrutiny of interpreter competence and inadequate training (Gallai, 2013; Hale, 2011; Hale & Gibbons, 1999; Wakefield, Kebbell, Moston, & Westera, 2015). In many forensic settings there is no minimum standard qualification required for interpreters (Hale, 2011), although some form of accreditation is desired. Further, qualifications do not guarantee competence; interpreters' skill level varies widely, even across similarly-accredited interpreters (Lee, 2009). Errors that interpreters make in forensic settings include alterations to the formality of language, the meaning and form of words used, the types of questions asked (e.g. from open-ended to yes/no; from indirect to direct), and changing pronouns, for example, 'I said' to 'he said' (Hale & Gibbons, 1999; Lai & Mulayim, 2014). Although these inaccuracies may not be identified at the time of the interview, numerous examples have been documented where subtle undetected differences in translation during recorded interviews were later identified as having led to misinterpretation, incomprehension and inconsistency in the evidential detail obtained (Powell, 2000).

Taken together, the above-mentioned research illustrates the need for greater accessibility of 'competent' interpreters. Caution

must be exercised, however, in drawing conclusions about whether the concept of interpreter competence is completely generalisable for different witness groups. The quality of interpreting is closely linked to the conditions under which interpreters are expected to work, yet little prior research has focused specifically on child sexual assault cases. For these cases, it is vital to give due consideration to the heightened vulnerability of the interviewee compared to other interviewees and the extreme sensitivity of the information being recalled. The current study, therefore, examines the experiences of using interpreters through the eyes of a group of highly experienced sexual assault prosecutors and investigative interviewers. The aim is to determine what (if any) additional challenges need to be considered when using interpreters with child abuse complainants.

Method

Participants

The participants comprised 21 professionals (15 females, 6 males) who regularly conduct interviews (either investigative or as part of the trial process) with non-English-speaking child complainants of abuse. These included prosecutors ($n = 8$), police officers ($n = 5$), child protection workers ($n = 6$), and forensic psychologists ($n = 2$), who were recruited directly by the researchers or through senior management within their respective organisations. All participants conducted investigative or evidentiary interviews with child witnesses as part of their job, and were informed that engagement in the study was voluntary. Recruitment continued until it was determined that data saturation had been reached (i.e. no new themes or issues were emerging from the individual interviews; Sim & Wright, 2000).

The sample of participants was heterogeneous. The professionals represent a range of Australian states and territories (six from South Australia, five from Northern Territory, four from Western Australia, three from

Victoria, two from Australian Capital Territory, and one from New South Wales). Professionals' duration of experience in their roles varies, and several have had experience across a number of different organisations and roles. To preserve the participants' anonymity, which was an ethical requirement of the study, further specific demographic information is not provided.

Procedure

In order to gain a thorough understanding of the professionals' concerns and the assumptions that underpin them, a non-directive and elaborate method of inquiry was deemed most appropriate (Legard, Keegan, & Ward, 2003; Patton, 2005). In-depth interviews were conducted by members of our research team, either in person or over the telephone. Interviews were conducted one-on-one, except for seven professionals who were interviewed in groups of three or four individuals. Interviews ranged in duration from approximately 28 to 80 minutes ($M = 40$, $SD = 15$).

During the interviews, the researchers invited participants to share their opinions and experiences of using interpreters in investigative and/or legal contexts. Each interview commenced with a broad, open-ended prompt inviting the individual to reflect on how the use of interpreters impacts the interview process. Subsequent lines of (open-ended) enquiry sought further elaboration about the factors that facilitate or inhibit effective interviewing of child abuse complainants using an interpreter, along with suggestions for improvement to the process. This was also facilitated through a recursive or conversational style of interviewing where the researchers merely acted as facilitators, asking only broad open-ended questions to encourage further elaboration and seek clarification. This ensured that the professionals had the autonomy to direct the discussion towards experiences, concerns and suggestions that are personally relevant to them, and

they had the ability to attribute their own meaning to these experiences.

Data Management and Analysis

All interviews were audio recorded, transcribed verbatim, double checked for accuracy, and de-identified. Initially, each transcript was subjected to open coding which involved a line-by-line analysis of the transcripts (i.e. reduction) and identification of concepts within statements which can be described in terms of their possible meaning. Statements with similar concepts were thus grouped together (Dey, 1993). The transcripts were then re-examined for statements that supported the identified categories. Identified concepts, categories and subcategories were then grouped according to core themes. Thus, the core themes that were identified helped to reduce the large volume of data into meaningful and parsimonious units of analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Quotations provided to illustrate the results of this study have undergone grammatical correction where necessary, and any potentially identifying details have been removed.

Results

Each professional recognised the important role that interpreters play in facilitating justice outcomes for child complainants of sexual abuse and relayed that the process is associated with many challenges. Two of the most prominent concerns relate to the difficulties of accessing interpreters and the poor quality of interpretation, particularly in remote locations and for small language groups. Even in cases where an interpreter was available, several professionals mentioned instances where they had observed clues of inaccurate interpretation. The participants expressed concern that inaccurate interpretation is resulting in the contamination of the witness' account, the potential inadmissibility of evidence and diminished credibility of the witness in court.

I got told there are only two that are available and they're booked out six months ahead.

The problem with interpreters is that they don't always strictly interpret what you say. For example, the witness might say one word and the interpreter provides ten sentences. Some changes are a lot less obvious, and usually there is no one else to check and balance what's being done.

Aside from the issue of misunderstandings in the communication process, offering victims the option to relay the offence in their native tongue is deemed important for enhancing the interviewee's sense of wellbeing and engagement in the judicial process. It shows the victim that he or she is a valued informant and that his or her voice is being heard.

Interpreters provide a mechanism where people who might otherwise not have their day in court have an opportunity to have their day in court.

Accessibility of interpreters and accuracy of interpretation were not the only two challenges raised; all professionals perceived two additional challenges specific to the process of interviewing children about sexual abuse, and it is these two challenges that are the focus of the present study. Specifically, two broad categories were identified: interpreters' frequent lack of preparedness to deal with the traumatic and sensitive nature of children's abuse histories, and insufficient understanding of 'best-practice' child investigative interview process. Each of these themes is now discussed in turn.

Preparedness to Deal with the Traumatic Nature of Children's Abuse Histories

Recounting traumatic and sensitive accounts places considerable cognitive and emotional strain on interviewees. All participants emphasised that this emotional strain can

lead to a marked deterioration in the child's ability to speak English, a decline that may not be apparent until well into the interview, once the child is already describing what happened in the abuse. Indeed, children's ability to speak English in the informal rapport-building stage of the interview may mask weaknesses that appear only under increasing linguistic and social demands. Several participants recommend, therefore, the need for widespread awareness of these potential difficulties when recruiting interpreters, and erring on the side of hiring an interpreter (where possible) when screening the child's level of English language. Too often it seems that an organisational decision is made that an interpreter is not needed, only to have this decision backfire later in the interview.

If somebody is really stressed, very often they can lose their language. You can see it happening in their face – as if the blood is flowing away from the frontal lobes.

Sometimes we'll have an interpreter in the room on standby just in case, because as children get tired their language will disappear and they need a bit of help.

The negative emotional impact of the subject matter on performance is also a concern in relation to its effect on the interpreters. Several participants reported cases where interpreters had clearly been uncomfortable with the topic of child sexual abuse, and had found it difficult to complete their role as a result. A decline in interpreter performance (due to the subject matter) can be heightened in situations where there are cultural taboos preventing transfer of information (e.g. taboos around sexual detail being discussed with the opposite gender) or relationships between small cultural groups creating loyalty binds between the interpreter and the victim's or suspect's family.

I've seen interviews with inappropriate interpreters. An example is a case where a male interpreted for a young female victim.

When that matter came to court, we had to get the transcript of his interview back-translated by another interpreter and we found that he had not interpreted correctly. There are cultural issues about males and females talking about sex, so I believe the young girl was uncomfortable talking to a male. And he's just done the job because he's been called in by the police to do a job as an interpreter; he's not even thinking about the impact on the young girl.

Sometimes children find it easier to talk [about the abuse] with somebody they know, and other times it is too shameful. So we will ask the question 'what do you think about an interpreter – should we use our normal interpreter, or a complete stranger?'. Families never want a complete stranger, but sometimes it is better. The issue of how well they [the interviewees] know their interpreter is often swept under the carpet in case management.

Many participants perceived that a lack of consideration of the impact of emotional content on interpreters not only hampers the evidence-gathering process (through its impact on interpreter performance) but it also compromises the child's well-being. Children can be highly sensitive to signs of distress in others, even when the signs are ambiguous or subtle. Observing the negative reaction of their disclosure on others directly impacts their own emotional state and their willingness to disclose further information, thus contributing to case attrition.

It [hearing these stories] can be quite shocking to interpreters. You see this in their body language – through that very wide-eyed stare, shallow breathing or other indicators. It's not like it happens every time, but children have picked up on it and it's been an issue.

Lack of knowledge of the justice process and the protective factors that follow the interview was perceived to exacerbate interpreters' psychological distress when hearing victims' stories. It seemed apparent to some participants that interpreters had not

anticipated the nature of the content when they took on the job, and that access to counselling or debriefing, either professionally or informally with colleagues, was not deemed important.

I remember a case where the interpreter hung up the phone and left because they couldn't cope any longer. What was happening in the meeting became too distressing for her to listen to.

If you're an interpreter and don't have that Child Protection knowledge, you'll come in and be very easily dragged around emotionally. But if you know that the child has a case worker and care plan, you'll know there's a safety net in place for this child.

Several professionals complained about the lack of clear strategies (on their own part) for minimising and overcoming emotional problems arising during the interpreting process. While they can routinely warn interpreters in advance about the nature of the material and the possibility of family connections with the complainant, warnings alone may not eliminate the detrimental impact of these factors within the interview. Without prior experience of these interviews, it is difficult for interpreters to be prepared for their true mental impact. Further, the identity of the people involved in the case is often not known until well into the interview. Even in situations where personal sensitivities to sexual assault content or family connections with the interviewee are known in advance, limited availability of interpreters sometimes means that inappropriate interpreters cannot always be avoided

Quite often we have to call four or five different interpreters before finding one who is available and willing. Some say no because they might be a family member. I can understand that they wouldn't want to have to go in and tell their family members why they're being bad parents and that sort of stuff.

It is essential to have interpreters who understand the subject matter. We had one person, even though we told them what they were coming to talk about, who became so distressed she couldn't continue. We needed a second person.

Understanding of 'Best-Practice' Child Interview and Interpretation Process

All participants acknowledged that the process of eliciting an account of abuse from a traumatised child involves providing an environment that facilitates the free flow of information as well as the use of appropriate questions. Interpreters are perceived as having the potential to influence both of these elements. In an environment in which trust and comfort are integral to enabling the witness' disclosure, the participants expressed concern that the presence of the interpreter (another unfamiliar person in the interview room) can contribute to interviewee fatigue. Furthermore, the participants reported that the very interpretation process itself can hinder the elicitation of a detailed narrative evidence for two reasons. First, having one's language interpreted is often unfamiliar and stressful for children who have not previously used an interpreter. Consequently, interpretation increases the cognitive load on children during the interview. The added complexity heightens fatigue and the risk of communication errors.

There is a lot of language going on, a lot of unknowns as well, so I think the child is constantly on high alert. From the child's perspective, there's an extra person judging you, so it's very exhausting.

Second, while best-practice interview guidelines indicate that interviewers should avoid interrupting the interviewee's responses, when a child's narrative is relayed through an interpreter it is necessarily disrupted while each segment of speech is translated. The participants reported that these disruptions make the flow of the story less

natural and can lead to the child losing concentration. It is believed however that this limitation is inherent to the interpretation process – even with a skilled interpreter – and that the only perceived means of circumventing this problem is simultaneous interpretation.

It's very hard to get a free narrative from a child with a hearing impairment. I would say to the interpreter 'let the child tell us their story from beginning to end, and then we'll go through it bit by bit. I'm hoping that when they tell you the story they will give a good long free narrative'. So the child will say 'It was Thursday and I went down to the river, and we were going fishing, and Billy was there and his dad is not a very nice man and he...', and before that child goes any further, that's all the interpreter can remember, so then she has to start talking to me about what the child's just said, and that's cut him off which is not what you want for a free narrative. And then I'm writing notes and still trying to keep this child engaged with some kind of eye contact. 'Okay, so you said that you were down at the river with Billy, and his dad is not very nice. What happened next?'. It's an immense challenge.

Professionals who regularly interview child sexual abuse victims are intently aware of the legal requirements around *what* information is required (e.g. evidential details provided in the child's own words) and *how* it should be gathered (e.g. using open-ended prompts and no leading questions) in order to successfully prosecute. These issues are important in many situations but particularly with young children, who are more prone to suggestion and misunderstanding than older interviewees. Some interpreters – particularly those unaccustomed to working with child complainants – were reported as underestimating the high level of skill involved in translating questions in a developmentally appropriate and non-leading way. Although it is sometimes difficult to tell the skill level of interpreters, a lack of insight among some interpreters reflects negatively on the

profession as a whole. One child protection worker recounted an experience in which her open-ended question was transformed into a leading forced-choice question that considerably narrowed the interviewee's response options.

With children, even if the structure of the question is changed ever so slightly, it can have big ramifications. The smallest statements in a trial, the smallest things can make all the difference.

Suggestions for minimising the detrimental impact of interpreters on the evidence-gathering process were threefold. First, independent scrutiny checks on the process are recommended (e.g. back-translation, peer review and the use of independent intermediaries) to ensure that interpreters have adequate skills in asking developmentally-appropriate questions. Second, many of the professionals recommended pre-conferencing – holding a brief meeting between the interviewer, child and interpreter prior to the interview. Pre-conferencing can help to make the interview and interpretation process more transparent to all involved. Such meetings are an ideal opportunity for the interviewer to brief the interpreter on the process and objective of the interview, to emphasise the necessity of accurate translation, and to encourage the interpreter to clarify ambiguous questions before putting them to the witness, as well as speak up when a word or concept is difficult to translate or there is no appropriate translation. Important points, such as the need to remain impartial and maintain the appropriate professional distance, can be conveyed to the interpreter during this meeting, as the perception of compromised impartiality can influence the child's perceived credibility – particularly in the case of courtroom interpretation where the jury observes the interpreter's behaviour towards the witness. Many participants recounted cases in which interpreters had not maintained a professional distance from witnesses, from sharing food

through to deliberate misinterpretation to influence the outcome of the case. Involving interpreters in the rapport-building phase of investigative interviews (subsequent to pre-conferencing) provides an opportunity for the child, interpreter and interviewer to practise and become accustomed to the process and style of questioning.

It's really important that we brief interpreters at the beginning. I tell them that they must repeat what it is that I'm asking using sentences structured specifically for gaining evidence, and if that's a problem at any time they must let me know and we can discuss it. If we need to have a break and stop interviewing, we can do that too.

I've seen situations where an interpreter forms a view of the trial and the witnesses, and takes a side and starts to do improper things.

Third, better training for interpreters in child developmental protocol is viewed as necessary. While most interpreters receive some training, the quality and quantity of training is perceived to be inadequate. Improved training in the investigative interview process would help to ensure that the language is as simple as possible, resulting in a reduction of unnecessarily complex questioning. Improved training for interpreters about sexual offences and child protection would better equip them – emotionally and professionally – to work within the system. A nationwide standardised interpreter training and accreditation programme is viewed as the best way to ensure that all interpreters gain a minimum standard of professionalism and competence. Other suggested improvements to training include peer-based education, where competent, experienced interpreters assist others in gaining the necessary skills, as well as increasing avenues for providing formal feedback and internships where interpreters spend time observing investigative interviews and court processes before interpreting in that context. Improved knowledge of the services

available, as well as improved ways to assess the need for interpreters, could ensure that interpreters are used in times of need.

It's one thing to have a good process but it's another thing to ensure that it's known about. I've had experiences where I've been called to police interviews for the purpose of assessing individuals and was surprised to see that that person had already been interviewed for some hours without an interpreter. My first recommendation had been, 'well, before I even conduct an assessment I think we need to get an interpreter to assist me'.

The participants perceive that interpreter training also needs to address the importance of professional demeanour, as a means of building trust and facilitating disclosure. Many examples were cited among the participants of interpreters who had failed to demonstrate the required level of professionalism. One police officer had attended an interview where she perceived the interpreter to have shown a subtly hostile demeanour, causing restriction in the witness' answers. A child protection worker mentioned an interpreter in a child abuse case who wore bizarre make-up and was quite frightening to the child. Another described a situation where an interpreter had breached confidentiality in a child protection case, leading to a loss of trust within the community.

I had an interpreter come in and she was a very scary-looking lady – horrendously scary. She had big thick eyebrows and very red lips. My first thought when I saw her is she's going to frighten the child to death. So I think there's something there about interpreters knowing the process of what they're doing, so they'll get that there's a reason for it, that they pay a pivotal role in the interview. If they're in the room they need to be dressed appropriately and they need to be a warm sort of a person.

We booked an interpreter to do a series of highly sensitive interviews with some young girls and that interpreter rang the community the day before the interviews were scheduled and told the community why they

were coming. She [the interpreter] completely breached confidentiality and the whole thing went out the window for about six months.

A common concern for all participants (irrespective of background) relates to the low profile of child abuse work and the need for, and importance of, interpreters. Under-resourcing, which is regarded as more relevant at the investigative rather than courtroom stage, impedes professionals' ability to hire an interpreter when needed, and also restricts the quality of the interpreters who are hired. Cost plays a particularly large role in the consideration of whether to hire an interpreter in remote areas because of the additional expenses associated with the interpreter's travel and accommodation. Many professionals also expressed concerns regarding the interpreters' low rates of pay, due to the impact it has on their availability, as they need to undertake other employment in order to earn a sufficient income.

I had to fight to have an interpreter – it's not the norm because of the money. That's sad because we're talking about sexual abuse of a child, which is extremely sensitive. I fought for an interpreter because there hasn't been a lot of talk about it in the community. There hasn't been a lot of exposure or learning or education. I particularly wanted an interpreter there to help us talk this through with the family to explain what had happened.

A lot of interpreters will work for a range of services, so they're not that easily accessible. They have to do it around their own work times and that's a bit restrictive for us as well.

I suppose it's like anything – if you improve the pay that people are going to get, make it more attractive, then hopefully you're going to get a higher quality of candidates.

Discussion

The central message arising from this study is that, while there is overwhelming support

among investigative interviewers and prosecutors for involving interpreters in interviews with child complainants of sexual abuse, interpreters are severely underutilised, particularly in small language groups where availability is an issue and in organisations with limited financial resources. Further, this study has shown that concerns about interpreter competence reported in other forensic settings generalise to interviews about child sexual abuse, a particularly problematic issue given that these cases rely heavily on the victim's verbal account of what happened due to the absence of physical or other corroborative evidence (Heger, Ticson, Velasquez, & Bernier, 2002; Kellog, Menard, & Santos, 2004; Walsh, Jones, Cross, & Lippert, 2008). Indeed, interpreting sexual abuse disclosures poses additional complexities resulting from the traumatic nature of the content being relayed (for both the child and the interpreter) and the heightened vulnerability and suggestibility of child witnesses. It is clear that interpreter training in the area of child abuse investigation needs to extend its focus beyond simply translating questions and responses in order to maintain their structure and meaning. Training should also build interpreters' competency in maintaining a non-verbal demeanour that facilitates accurate disclosure and maintains a context where children feel heard, understood and not judged (Cyr, Dion, & Powell, 2014). Screening of interpreters therefore requires an understanding of the procedural and substantive aspects of child abuse interviewing, while also ensuring that interpreters have the individual resources – and access to the necessary psychological support – to mentally cope with the graphic details being obtained.

More rigorous screening of interpreters would likely place even greater strain on an already limited pool of interpreting services for many non-English-speakers. However, the interpreters themselves have strongly expressed a need for improved training – as well as a better briefing of the nature of their role and provision of background materials

prior to the assignment – in order to function well in their role (Hale, 2011). Consistent with contemporary models of interpreter policy directions, broad and multifaceted changes are required, including better clarification of interpreter responsibilities and the nature of the content under discussion, maximising the reach and availability of services, extending usage of technology (as an alternative to face-to-face interpreting) and improving interpreter budgets (Garrett, 2009). The review of evidence related to interpreter service effectiveness indicates that systemic changes may be needed at an operational level to effect these improvements (Garrett, 2009). This study further highlights the importance of defining these reforms within the central need to support vulnerable people in the giving of evidence, and as being crucial to the fundamental rights of both complainants and accused persons to a fair trial.

On the positive side, there have been considerable advances in recent years in the development of brief training exercises that can successfully promote sustained adherence to best-practice interviewing (for a review, see Benson & Powell, 2015), many of which may be useful in the context of interpreter training. For example, training interviewers to successfully identify various types of questions (through an e-learning activity) has been strongly associated with their adherence to best-practice interview techniques such as the use of open-ended questions (Yii, Powell, & Guadagno, 2014). There has also been an increase in evidence-based practices related to the screening of professionals who work in the area of sexual assault, and for teaching strategies to cope with the stress of working in child abuse investigation (Powell, Cassematis, Benson, Smallbone, & Wortley, 2014). The importance of psychological screening and the provision of support are highlighted by research identifying the possibility of traumatic stress for professionals working with victims of abuse (e.g. Bontempo & Malcolm, 2012; Cohen & Collens, 2013; Mehus & Becher, 2015). Although recent reviews of

the construct of secondary trauma show mixed results, some people clearly do report adverse psychological effects from exposure to clients' traumatic sexual experiences (Elwood, Mott, Lohr, & Galovski, 2011; Wortley, Smallbone, Powell, & Cassematis, 2014).

In conclusion, this study demonstrates the issues that can arise when the specialised nature of responding to child sexual abuse intersects with the specialised nature of providing interpreter services. The results highlight the need for evidence-based systemic improvements to address the concerns raised by interviewers and prosecutors in this study, enhance interpreters' competence and well-being, reduce delays and misunderstandings during the trial and investigation process, and improve the quality of evidence and justice outcomes in child sexual abuse cases. These improvements would also help to facilitate a smoother and less stressful experience of the judicial system for children from non-English-speaking backgrounds reporting sexual abuse.

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the support of the professionals who volunteered to participate in this project and to those who assisted with conducting the interviews.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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