Forensic interviews with children in Scotland: A survey of interview practices among police.

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Abstract

The present study surveyed 91 police interviewers in Scottish police forces about their perceptions of how well they adhered to the Scottish Executive (2003) guidelines. Almost all respondents (97%) received the appropriate national training and overwhelmingly indicated (again 97%) that their training equipped them either quite, very, or extremely well for conducting their interviews. Thus, it is not surprising that interviewers also indicated that they believed that their interviews resulted in obtaining a full and complete account of events in question (88%). However, aside from this positive self evaluation there are reasons to be concerned as to the quality of interviews that are being conducted; 1) Most interviewers (78%) received no refresher training, 2) no interviewers received formal feedback about the quality of interviews that they conducted, 3) practice interviews were routinely not included as part of the interview, 4) the use of open-ended prompts was not widespread with 20% of interviews indicating that they never use them, and 5) interviews are not currently being recorded. These results are discussed with respect to other studies of interviewer behaviour along with recommendations for future training.

Keywords: forensic interviewing, child abuse, police practice, survey

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Child abuse is a significant problem. A recent survey of 2869 young adults in the UK revealed that 11% of the boys and 21% of the girls had experienced sexual abuse, and that 6% and 8%, respectively, had experienced physical abuse before they turned 18 (May-Chahal & Cawson, 2005). Child abuse in similarly prevalent in other developed countries (Fanslow, Robinson, Crengle, & Perese, 2007). In the vast majority of cases, abusers are family members or known members of the children's community, and it is common for children to be repeatedly victimized. It is also common for children to delay disclosure, perhaps because they have been sworn to secrecy, feel embarrassed or ashamed, or want to protect people they love (Pipe, Lamb, Orbach, & Cederborg, 2007; May-Chahal & Cawson, 2005) and an unknown number of abuse victims never report their experiences to anyone.

The problems stemming from child abuse are manifold and often long-lasting. For example, many children in the UK who were abused before the age of 7 years reported re-victimization as well as externalizing problems, educational difficulties, and health problems when interviewed as teenagers (Frothingham, Hobbs, Wynne, Yee, Goyal, & Wadsworth, 2000). Victims of child sexual abuse are twice as likely to become involved in abusive relationships later in life (Fanslow et al., 2007). Moreover, participation in the legal system and testifying in court are associated with poorer mental health outcomes, especially when the experiences are particularly stressful for the individuals concerned (Quas, et al. 2005). It is difficult to estimate the full

costs of child abuse to society, but they are likely to be large given the numbers of children involved and the long-term consequences.

Recognizing the broad social consequences of child abuse, considerable efforts have been made to protect children by effective policing, with emphasis on the collection of evidence in forensic interviews with children. Investigators must rely a great deal on children's formal statements because there is often very little other evidence. Children's statements not only provide accounts of what happened, but may also reveal investigative leads that can be followed up to corroborate the children's reports (Darvish, Hershkowitz, Lamb, & Orbach, 2008).

Information gained in investigative interviews thus plays a crucial role in the investigation of child abuse. Fortunately, more than 30 years of research on child interviewing clearly shows how investigative interviews should, and should not, be conducted (Brainerd & Reyna, 2005; Eisen, Quas, & Goodman, 2002; Kuehnle & Connell, 2009; Lamb, Hershkowitz, Orbach, & Esplin, 2008; Milne & Bull, 1999; Poole & Lamb, 1998; Westcott, Davies, & Bull, 2002). All experts agree on the importance of allowing children to provide accounts of what happened *in their own words*. The most reliable information is obtained when interviewers use open-ended prompts for information such as "tell me what happened" and "tell me more about that;" such prompts also yield information that is most likely to be accurate (Dent & Stephenson, 1979; Goodman, Hirschman, Hepps, & Rudy, 1991; Lamb et al., 2008; Orbach & Lamb, 2001). By contrast, information is likely to be of poorer quality when interviewers interject information or ask leading/suggestive questions that communicate what they expect to be told (see Kulkofsky & London, in press;

London & Kulkofsky, 2010 for reviews). Professionals have also translated research findings into guidelines for interviewers such as the Memorandum of Good Practice (Home Office, 1992), Achieving Best Evidence (Home Office, 2002, 2007), the NICHD Protocol (Lamb et al., 2008; Orbach, Hershkowitz, Lamb, Sternberg, Esplin, & Horowitz, 2000) and the Guidance for Interviewing Child Witnesses and Victims in Scotland (Scottish Executive, 2003).

Forensic interviewing in Scotland

In Scotland, guidance for conducting forensic interviews with children was commissioned by the Scottish Executive (2003) for use by police officers and social workers. The Scottish Executive (2003) guidelines were informed by the findings of experimental research and literature reviews (Bruck, Ceci, Francoeur, & Renick, 1995; Bussey, 1992; Steward & Steward, 1996; for reviews see Bull, 2001; Eisen, Quas, & Goodman, 2002; Poole & Lamb, 1998; Westcott, Davies & Bull, 2002) as well as field studies of actual forensic interviews with alleged victims (Lamb, Hershkowitz, Sternberg, Esplin, Hovav, Manor, & Yudilevitch, 1996; Orbach, Hershkowitz, Lamb, Sternberg, Esplin, & Horowitz, 2000; Sternberg, Lamb, Davies, & Westcott, 2001).

Interviewers following the Scottish Executive (2003) guidelines use a Joint Investigative Interview Technique (JIIT) when conducting forensic interviews; both a social worker and a police officer thus participate in each interview. One interviewer takes the lead role and asks questions while the other keeps a record of what is said by the lead interviewer and the child. Unfortunately, there is no legal requirement that interviews be recorded electronically. Handwritten notes omit too much information and are too inaccurate to serve the same purposes as electronic records (Ceci & Bruck,

2000; Lamb, Orbach, Sternberg, Hershkowitz, & Horowitz, 2000; Warren & Woodall, 1999) so it is fortunate that some jurisdictions electronically record interviews on a voluntary basis. It is expected that electronic recording of child interviews will become mandatory throughout Scotland in the near future (personal communication, M. Henry).

In Scotland, interviewers tasked with conducting forensic interviews with children are typically trained for 1 week by experienced interviewers and social workers. Training involves familiarizing interviewers with the guidelines, practicing interviews with trained actors, receiving feedback on practice interviews, learning about communicative and developmental issues, and learning about the role of the interview in the wider context of criminal proceedings. The Scottish Executive (2003) guidelines for interviewers are very similar to the NICHD Protocol that has been the subject of intensive research (Lamb et al., 2008), with the following components emphasized:

Rapport. Interviewers should always establish rapport to put children at ease. This is an opportunity for interviewers to overcome reticence, and to gain insights into the children's ability and/or willingness to communicate.

Ground rules. Interviewers should also communicate the 'ground rules,' making children aware that they are in control of the interview and should not feel pressured to answer questions if they do not know the answers. Children should know that they can ask interviewers to explain anything that they do not understand. Successfully communicating the ground rules should help interviewers obtain complete and accurate accounts of what happened.

Telling the truth. Interviewers should also make children aware of the importance of giving true accounts of what happened. Interviewers usually do this by having children demonstrate that they know the difference between telling the truth and telling lies, often by describing a scenario that involves either the truth or a lie and asking the children, “would that be the truth or a lie?” It is preferable that children *demonstrate* that they know the difference between truth and falsehood using examples rather than be asked to *define* truth and lies because it is actually very difficult even for adults to define these abstract concepts.

The practice interview*.* A practice interview about a neutral topic extends rapport-building before substantive issues are discussed and allows children to become more familiar with the process of answering open-ended questions. Children learn that they that will be doing most of the talking and can control the pace. Interviewers also learn more about the children’s communicative abilities. This is a particularly important phase because most children have had little prior experience been questioned using open-ended prompts.

Free narrative using open-ended prompts*.* The style of prompting used in the practice interview should be continued into the substantive phase where children are asked to provide free-recall narratives of what happened. This allows children of all ages to provide accounts of what happened in their own words. The free narrative should be obtained using open-ended prompts for information such as “tell me what happened,” “tell me more about that,” and “then what happened.” Research shows that recall is most accurate when open-ended prompts are used and that answers to open-ended prompts are

perceived as more credible in court (Lamb et al., 2008; Poole & Lamb 1998). Because responses to such prompts are longer, they also allow interviewers more time to formulate their next questions or prompts, and require them to ask fewer questions overall (Lamb et al., 2008).

Specific questions. After children have described what happened in their own words, interviewers often need to ask additional focused questions, often in the form of 'Wh' questions. These questions should only ask about topics that have been mentioned by the children.

Closed questions. These questions are phrased in such a way that only 'yes' or 'no' responses are required, or are phrased so that the children must choose between alternatives provided by the interviewers. These types of questions often yield incorrect answers, in part because they may refer to details that are not remembered well, leading children to guess because they want to satisfy the questioner.

Leading questions and suggestive questions. Children should not be asked questions that could be construed as leading or suggestive because they imply that particular answers would be correct or would please the interviewers.

The present study

There has been no previous evaluation of forensic interviews with children in Scotland, so we do not know whether interviewers are adhering to the Scottish Executive (2003) guidelines. Accordingly, we surveyed police interviewers in the Scottish forces, using a questionnaire based on one used by Dando, Wilcock, and Milne (2008), asking how frequently respondents

used the recommended interview techniques, and how effective they perceived these techniques to be. Respondents were asked to describe their general experience of interviewing, and could provide any other information about forensic interviewing. Respondents indicated how long they had been conducting interviews and what training they had received. Additional comments were invited.

Method

Sample and procedure

The questionnaire was distributed to serving police officers throughout Scotland working in Family/Child Protection Units. The numbers of surveys distributed was determined by face-to-face consultations with managers in the Family/Child Protection Units. In small units, all staff members were given opportunities to complete questionnaires, whereas managers in larger forces determined that this would be too resource intensive, so they selected respondents so as to sample the geographic areas involved comprehensively.

A covering letter explained that the aim of the survey was to gather interviewers' impressions of forensic interviews with children. Respondents were provided envelopes in which they could seal their completed questionnaire and be assured that their anonymity would be protected. The questionnaires remained in their sealed envelopes until they were collected by the first author. The questionnaires were distributed and collected between May 2008 and February 2009. Respondents completed the questionnaires during work time and received no payment for their participation.

Materials

The questionnaire was based on one used by Dando et al. (2008). It asked for both quantitative and qualitative information of the following types: 1) *Personal information:* Respondents were asked for information about their age, gender, rank, and length of service. 2) *Experience interviewing:* Respondents were asked about the amount of time they spent conducting forensic interviews, the numbers of interviews they had conducted, the types of crimes that they interviewed children about, and whether they thought their interviewing yielded full and accurate accounts of what happened. They were also asked to indicate whether they felt they were under time pressures to complete interviews and, if so, to describe those pressures. 3) *Training:* Respondents were asked about any specialist training that they had received in addition to their JIIT training, refresher training courses they had attended, and how long ago they had received such training. They were also asked whether they thought their training had provided them with the skills needed to conduct interviews effectively and whether there were any aspects of training that could be improved. 4) *Feedback:* Respondents were also asked to indicate whether or not they received feedback about their interviews from other interviewers or supervisors and, if so, to describe the nature of the feedback. 5) *Specific interview components:* Respondents were then asked to provide details about specific components of the Scottish Executive (2003) guidelines. They were asked about the extent to which they complied with recommendations regarding rapport-building, ground rules, telling the truth, practice interview, open-ended questions, specific questions, closed questions, and leading questions, and were then asked to indicate whether

the recommended practices had the desired effect using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). 6) *Overall impressions:* A final section allowed respondents to provide their overall impressions based on their operational experience. The respondents' handwritten comments were transposed to a computer file, with topics categorized by 3 raters.

Results

Sample details and personal information

A total of 160 surveys were distributed to interviewers in the 8 Scottish police forces. The total response rate was 63% (100 responses). Nine responses were excluded because the interviewers indicated that they did not actually conduct forensic interviews with children as lead interviewers, thus, 91 were included in the analyses. The respondents' mean age was 37.13 years (SD= 6.40; range = 25 to 52); 42% were males and 58% females. The mean length of service was 11.21 years (SD= 5.60 years; range = 3.83 to 26.75). Most of the respondents indicated they were Detective Constables (DC = 61.5%) or Police Constables (PC = 34.1%) with the remaining officers being Sergeants (DS or PS).

Experience interviewing

On average, the respondents had been conducting forensic interviews with children for 4.22 years (SD = 4.19; range = 0.5 months to 23 years) with 1.9 interviews (SD = 1.30; range = 0.04 to 5.0) conducted each week. Most respondents interviewed children about sexual abuse (92.3%) and physical abuse (69.7%); fewer interviewed children about neglect (23.1%). Respondent claimed that they usually (64%), almost always (21.3%) or

always (2.2%) obtained full and complete accounts whereas 12.4% reported that they rarely obtained full and complete accounts.

When asked why they were not able to obtain full and complete accounts, most respondents referred to characteristics of the interviewees. For example, 21 comments referred to factors such as secrecy, unwillingness to talk to the police, and the desire to protect suspects. A further 8 respondents indicated that the children's ages prevented them from providing full and accurate accounts, while 9 said that the quality of the interview simply 'depends on the child.'

Most respondents indicated that they never (23.1%) or rarely (60.4%) experienced time pressures, although a minority (16.5%) indicating that they usually or almost always did. Reasons for time pressure were described by 47 respondents.

In 27 cases, pressure was created by the needs to proceed urgently, without adequate preparation time, to interview multiple suspected victims and witnesses, to coordinate with social workers to be present, especially when suspects were already in detention. Other sources of time pressure included the need to complete interviews before the end of a school day (11 respondents) or without parental knowledge (6 respondents), and pressure from parents eager for interviews to end. Limited child attention span was indicated as a source of time pressure by 8 respondents, while the concern that children were at risk of further abuse was cited by 7 respondents. Only 2 respondents indicated that other duties created pressure to complete interviews more quickly than they would have liked.

Training

Almost all of the respondents had received Join Investigative Interviewer Training (96.7%). When asked whether they had received any additional refresher type training only 22% indicated that they had, with the majority (78%) reporting no additional training. On average, the last training course attended by the respondents was 1.82 years earlier (SD = 2.46; range = 1 month to 12 years). Respondents thought that the training had equipped them with the necessary interviewing skills quite well (52.7%), very well (33.0%) or extremely well (11%), with only a very small number indicating that the training had not equipped them very well to conduct interviews (3.3%).

Nineteen respondents questioned the content of the training, with a number of respondents highlighting the inadequate attention paid to the demands of note-taking. A further 8 respondents said that experience was the best ‘training, ’ while 8 respondents were concerned about the absence of refresher training.

When asked to comment about aspects of the training that could be improved, 25 respondents recommended more practice interviews, information about what to do when children did not disclose, practical exercises, more input from experienced interviewers, information about the technical aspects regarding video recording, courtroom training, examples of real interviews and feedback about their interviews. In addition, 10 respondents indicated a need for refresher training.

Feedback

Only 39.6% of the respondents indicated that they received any feedback about the interviews they conducted; 22 of the respondents said that

they received verbal feedback from colleagues, social workers, or officers in charge (OICs) usually immediately after the interviews were conducted. It appears that much of the 'feedback' would have been about case-specific issues rather than the quality of interviewing; as one respondent wrote: "A debrief is always conducted but this assesses the *content* of the interview rather than the *quality* [emphasis added]." Only 2 respondents indicated that the received written feedback by email although this was not detailed.

Specific interview techniques

Perceived frequency of use. Table 1 displays the frequencies with which officers engaged in specific practices described in the Scottish Executive (2003) guidelines. During the pre-substantive phase of the interviews, 97% of the respondents reported that they always or almost always established rapport, 85% always or almost always explained the ground rules and demonstrated understanding truth and lies. However, 87% never or rarely conducted practice interviews even though it plays such an important role in facilitating recall of information about abuse.

Insert Table 1 about here (see page 28)

In the substantive phase, 88% of the respondents indicated that they always or almost always used specific *Wh*. questions, whereas only 43% of respondents indicated that they always or almost always used open prompts. Of even greater concern, 20% of the interviewers never or rarely used open prompts to elicit information during interviews! Fortunately, 99% of respondents claimed that they never or rarely ever asked leading or suggestive questions.

A subsequent analysis explored whether adherence to the guidelines varied depending on the amount of experience interviewing children. Respondents were divided into two groups of respondents based on their years of experience interviewing children. There were no significant differences between these groups, with all X^2 values lower than 9.51 and all *p* values greater than .05. These findings clearly indicate that the amount of self-reported experience of interviewing children does not affect the perceived use of various interview techniques.

Perceived effectiveness. Table 2 displays the officers' average opinions regarding the extent to which the various recommended practices actually helped children describe their experience. A Chi-square analysis of the respondents' ratings revealed significant differences for each component with all X^2 values exceeding 7.76 and *p* values lower than .05. Therefore, we can conclude that these respondents clearly perceived some techniques to be more useful than others.

Insert Table 2 about here (see page 29)

Inspection of Table 2 shows that rapport, ground rules and the truth and lie demonstration were all seen to be, at the very least, 'quite' effective components of the pre-substantive phase of the interview by 85% of the respondents. However, the respondents were split regarding the perceived effectiveness of practice interviews, with 52% indicating that practice interviews were not very effective or not at all effective, whereas the remaining 48% thought that they were quite, very, or always effective.

In the substantive phase of the interview, 12% of respondents indicated that open prompts were not effective while the remaining 88% thought that

open questions were either quite, very, or always effective. However, only 15% of respondents thought that closed Y/N questions were not effective, while the remaining 85% indicated that closed Y/N questions were quite, very and always effective.

Specific Wh. questions were rated as quite, very, or always effective by 100% of the respondents. The majority of respondents (83%) reported that leading questions were not effective components of the interview, however, while the remaining 17% thought that leading and suggestive questions were quite effective.

As above, a second set of analyses asked whether the perceived effectiveness of specific guidelines varied depending on the respondents' experience. There were again no associations between years of experience and ratings of effectiveness with all X^2 values lower than 6.79 and p values greater than .08.

Overall impressions of interviewing

Nearly 60% of the respondents (55 in total) took advantage of the opportunity to make general comments about investigative interviewing. The most common complaint, voiced by 30% of the respondents, involved having to write down what was said in interviews because 1) it disrupted the flow and created long pauses that were sometimes filled with 'small talk' while the scribes caught up, 2) children found it distracting and it thus adversely affected the rapport that had been established, 3) children sometimes forgot what they had just said when asked to repeat their answers, 4) scribes missed out details, 5) scribes found it particularly difficult to note the lengthy responses to open prompts and thus preferred more direct and focused

questions, 6) non-verbal behaviour was not captured, and 7) it was sometimes not possible to read illegible and poorly spelled notes. A similar number of interviewers welcomed the possible introduction of electronic recording, typically noting that “Child interviews need to be visually recorded.” One interviewer placed the issue poignantly in context by writing that “I find it appalling that we can tape record all accused persons but still manually record interviews of children.”

Discussion

This survey of police officers yielded a number of important insights regarding the quality of investigative interviews of children in Scotland. Almost all (97%) had received JITT training as part of their work which they felt equipped them quite, very, or extremely well with the skills they needed. Not surprisingly, therefore, the majority of interviewers in this sample (88%) also believed that their interviews allowed them to obtain full and complete accounts of the events discussed. Therefore, at first blush, it appears that interviewing practices in Scotland are extremely good if this sample of interviewers are to be believed.

However, other responses raise concerns that interviewers may not actually be conducting interviews that adhere to best practice guidelines. First, many interviewers (78%) indicated that they had received no additional ‘refresher’ training after their initial 1-week JIIT courses. Because half of the police officers had been interviewing children for more than 3 years (some as long as 23 years), they would surely benefit from additional opportunities to broaden and extend their knowledge beyond that which can be conveyed in the initial 1-week courses. It is important that managers recognize the value

of continued professional development for police officers. Further, because effective interviewing demands a broad understanding of many aspects of child development and of the complexity of child maltreatment, the 1-week courses should be considered preliminary introductions to the topic, with further training made available on a regular basis. Advanced and supplementary training is particularly important in light of dramatic improvements in our knowledge and understanding of child forensic interviewing and of children's eyewitness memories both here and abroad (Bull, 2010; Lamb et al., 2008; Lamb, La Rooy, Katz & Malloy, In Preparation; La Rooy, Katz, Malloy & Lamb, In Press; La Rooy & Lamb, In Press). Providing access to up-to-date training incorporating new information is essential to ensure that current practice reflects the best evidence available.

Second, there was little evidence that interviewers received feedback about the quality of their interviews with children. Although about 40% of respondents indicated that they did receive feedback, they noted that the 'feedback' normally pertained to the specifics of the cases at hand rather than their developing skills as interviewers. Field research shows that continued feedback about interview practices are essential to ensure that interviewers adhere to recommended practices (Lamb, Sternberg, Orbach, Esplin, & Mitchell, 2002a; Lamb, Sternberg, Orbach, Hershkowitz, Horowtiz, & Esplin, 2002b, Fisher, 2010). Too often, interviewers receive one-off training that increases their knowledge and awareness of desirable practices but seldom affects the way that they actually interview children, particularly with regard to the use open-ended prompts (that draw on free recall memory) and the avoidance of focused prompts (that draw on recognition memory) (Aldridge &

Cameron, 1999; Sternberg et al., 2001; Orbach et al., 2000). Only when interviewers are given specific feedback on the quality of their interviews on a regular basis do they continue to perform interviews of high quality (Lamb et al., 2002b, 2008). Providing ongoing feedback to interviewers in Scotland should be considered a priority by interview trainers and managers.

Third, there were disconcerting responses regarding specific components of the Scottish Executive (2003) guidelines. Most interviewers (87%) never or rarely conducted practice interviews (discussion of neutral topics designed to prepare the child for the main part of the interview) even though nearly half (48%) believed the practice interview to be quite, very, or always effective or helpful. In fact, the amount of information obtained using open-prompts can be further maximized when interviewers practice using open-ended prompts in the pre-substantive phase of the interview. Children who were given practice interviews reported as much as 2 ½ times more information in response to the first question asked during the substantive phase of the interview (Sternberg et al., 1997). Practice interviews thus lay the groundwork for the information gathering that follows (Brubacher, Roberts & Powell, 2009; Sternberg et al., 1997), and it is not clear why this evidence-based recommendation by the Scottish Executive (2003) has not been implemented more widely. Managers and police trainers should take steps to remedy this widespread departure from the guidelines, providing appropriate and timely training and feedback to all interviewers.

Fourth, it appears that interviewers do not use open-ended prompts as frequently as they should; there is extensive evidence that they are the most effective way of obtaining information from children in forensic interviews

(Dent & Stephenson, 1979; Goodman, Hirschman, Hepps, & Rudy, 1991; Lamb et al., 2008; Orbach & Lamb, 2001). Fewer than half of the respondents (43%) indicated that they always, or almost always used open-ended prompts whereas a large minority (20%) indicated that they never, or only rarely, used open prompts, even though most (88% overall) believed that open prompts are indeed quite, very, or always effective. Previous research shows that interviewers tend to exaggerate their use of open-ended questions, the most important element of evidence based practice in this area, so these responses raise serious concerns about the quality of investigative interviewing in Scotland.

Fifth, most interviewers (88%) indicated that they always, or almost always used Wh. questions, while all respondents thought that these type of focused questions were quite, very or always effective in eliciting information. These findings starkly contrast with responses regarding the perceived use and effectiveness of open prompts. Again trainers and managers need to identify the possible causes of these incorrect perceptions.

The survey yielded further support for suggestions that investigative interviews with children should be electronically recorded (Scottish Executive, 2007). Available evidence overwhelmingly shows that electronic recording of interviews is the best way to preserve evidence. It is not possible to know exactly what was said in an interview unless it was recorded (Lamb et al., 2000; Warren & Woodall, 1999). Research has also shown that the types of questions asked also affect the types of answers received, again underscoring the need for exact recordings of what was said (Ceci & Bruck, 2000). Evidence is lost when interviews are not recorded. Further, the

absence of recorded interviews makes it impossible to accurately and directly determine whether or not the Scottish Executive (2003) recommendations are actually followed by the police officers interviewing children and also makes it very difficult for interviewers, trainers and managers, to review interview practices and facilitate individual professional development.

Previous research in the UK makes clear that Government guidelines about interviewing child witnesses are not always implemented (Lamb et al., 2009; Sternberg et al., 2001). Rather, the release of Government guidelines is the *beginning* of a process designed to improve interviewing standards – not the end of a process. The quality of interviews must be independently and regularly checked to ensure that standards are achieved and maintained. Such evaluations also allow training resources to be targeted most effectively (Lamb et al., 2002a, 2002b).

Substantial resources are currently invested in training police officers and social workers in Scotland, yet no attempts have been made to evaluate the success of previous training, or to evaluate the effectiveness of any new training provided. Such evaluation is needed before even more resources are invested in training following the introduction of mandatory video-recoding in Scotland. This survey has identified important concerns about the quality of forensic interviewing and these should be the focus of future training efforts.

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Table 1. Percentages of police officers' reported practices.

Component	1 Never	2 Rarely	3 Usually	4 Almost always	5 Always	N	X^2	p-value
Pre-Substantive Phase								
Rapport	0	0	3.3	17.6	79.1	91	X^2 *(2)*= 88.64	$p < .001$
Ground rules	0	3.3	12.2	25.6	58.9	90	X^2 *(3)*= 64.13	$p < .001$
Telling the truth	0	1.1	13.3	17.8	67.8	90	X^2 *(3)*= 93.20	$p < .001$
Practice interview	60.0	26.7	2.2	8.9	2.2	90	X^2 *(4)*= 108.00	$p < .001$
Substantive Phase								
Open prompts	3.4	17.0	36.4	29.5	13.6	88	X^2 *(4)*= 30.06	$p < .001$
Specific Wh. questions	0	0	12.1	41.8	46.2	91	X^2 *(2)*=18.74	$p < .001$
Closed Y/N questions	2.2	19.1	33.7	29.2	15.7	89	X^2 *(4)*= 27.01	$p < .001$
Leading	56.7	42.2	1.1	0	0	90	X^2 *(2)*= 44.86	$p < .001$

Table 2. Percentages of police officers' ratings of the *effectiveness* of specific recommended practices.

Component	1 Not effective at all	2 Not very effective	3 Quite effective	4 Very effective	5 Always effective	N	X^2	p-value
Pre-Substantive Phase								
Rapport	0	1.1	38.5	49.5	11.0	91	X^2 *(3)*= 56.29	$p < .001$
Ground rules	1.2	11.0	59.8	25.6	2.4	82	X^2 *(4)*= 96.53	$p < .001$
Telling the truth	0	9.6	55.4	30.1	4.8	83	X^2 *(3)*= 52.95	$p < .001$
Practice interview	6.5	45.2	32.3	16.1	0	31	X^2 *(3)*= 10.93	$p < .012$
Substantive Phase								
Open prompts	0	11.8	52.6	34.2	1.3	76	X^2 *(3)*= 48.10	$p < .001$
Specific Wh. questions	0	0	25.3	57.1	17.6	91	X^2 *(2)*= 24.02	$p < .001$
Closed Y/N questions	2.2	12.4	48.3	31.5	5.6	89	X^2 *(4)*= 67.34	$p < .001$
Leading	37.3	45.8	16.9	0	0	59	X^2 *(2)*= 7.76	$p < .021$