

SEXUAL ABUSE EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN IN PERU: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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This ethnographic study relied primarily on case notes and interviews with the president of Centro Prenatal Vida Nueva, a pregnancy center in Lima, Peru, to study the sexual abuse experiences of 33 Peruvian women. Given the language limitations of the researchers, the analyses were completed in collaboration with the president of the center, a United States citizen who has lived in Peru for many years. The results indicated cultural differences among the sexual abuse victims who came from various regions of Peru, such as the mountain, jungle, or shanty towns. Family reactions to abuse were primarily negative. The impact of sexual abuse on the victims included depression, compulsive behavior, shame, guilt, fear, stigmatization, and significant alterations in future relationships and lifestyle patterns. Abuse within Peruvian culture seemed prevalent.