

What Is An Ephebophile And How Is He or She Different From A Pedophile?

You have probably read since January 2002 about reports in the Roman Catholic Church of priests molesting children. When these cases have been examined in detail, the majority of accusations relate to adult priests molesting adolescent boys, 14 to 17 years of age. These abusers are called "ephebophiles" because they have a sexual interest in children who are post-puberty. Less common in the media reports of molestations in the Roman Catholic Church are reports of priests molesting children under 14 years of age. These abusers are called "pedophiles."

Recent research indicates that the ratio of male pedophiles who molest boys versus male ephebophiles who molest boys, is four to one. That means male pedophiles are four times more frequent than male ephebophiles.

But male ephebophiles who molest boys frequently become involved with other children. A study of over 600 male ephebophiles found that slightly over 50% also had a history of molesting boys under age 14. In addition, over 28% had molested girls under age 14, and 20% had molested girls 14 to 17 years of age.* From this information, it is clear that one shouldn't assume that a male ephebophile who molests adolescent boys doesn't also molest other categories of boys and girls.

* *Statistics provided by Abel Screening Incorporated, Atlanta, GA, August 2002.*