

## 6

### THE EMPIRICAL PROCESS

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter one the researcher outlined the proposed blueprint of how the intended study (to develop a forensic interview protocol which would be legally defensible) was planned. The researcher motivated the rationale for the research (paragraph 1.1), as well as the process of intervention research (paragraph 1.7).

Chapter two of this study dealt with the phenomenon of child sexual abuse. From this chapter it was clear that cases of child sexual abuse are reported daily to the South African Police Service and social workers, and that sexual abuse has a long-term impact on individuals.

The normal development of the child regarding cognitive, emotional, moral and linguistic aspects was discussed in chapter three. Developmental issues that needed to be considered during forensic interviews have been highlighted and incorporated in the self-developed checklist and proposed seven-phase forensic interview protocol.

In chapter four, interviewing the child victim of alleged sexual abuse was discussed. Among the aspects highlighted by literature were the importance of comprehensive training before engaging in forensic interviewing and the use of non-leading interviewing techniques. These aspects were incorporated in the proposed protocol.

A comprehensive literature study, consultations with experts in the field of social work and psychology, and the input of legal professionals were incorporated to develop the seven-phase forensic interview protocol and the self-developed checklist. The researcher's extensive experience in the field of forensic assessment interviews, training of professionals nationally on this topic and testimonies in criminal trials were also integrated during the development of the

intervention. The seven-phase forensic interview protocol and self-developed checklist were discussed in chapter five.

It is imperative to note that the purpose of this research was to evaluate whether the seven-phase forensic interview protocol, which consists of fundamentals which are legally defensible, could be successfully implemented. In order to determine which fundamentals are legally defensible, the researcher conducted a thorough literature study, consulted with experts and incorporated her experience as expert witness in criminal cases of child sexual abuse. The study also aimed to evaluate whether the proposed protocol and the fundamentals are currently being used in practice by social workers.

The aim of this study was not to determine whether the seven-phase forensic interview protocol would facilitate more legally defensible information. This would, however, be part of a follow-up study where the outcome of the specific criminal court cases where the protocol was used will be monitored and the information gathered from the interview will be compared to the child's testimony.

With the assistance of the Department of Statistics of the University of Pretoria, the results of the data that were collected and analysed during the empirical study are presented graphically in this chapter, together with the interpretation thereof.

## **6.2 RESEARCH PROCESS**

The research process has already been discussed in detail in chapter one. A summary will be given here to orientate the reader towards the information and findings.

### **6.2.1 Goal**

The goal of this study was:

**To develop, implement and evaluate a legally defensible interview protocol for social workers to facilitate disclosure of child sexual abuse for children in the middle childhood years.**

## **6.2.2 Objectives**

The following objectives were set in order to achieve the goal of the study:

- To develop a theoretical framework regarding:
  - child development in the middle childhood;
  - dynamics in interviewing children;
  - a sound knowledge base regarding child sexual abuse;
  - the facilitation of disclosure of child sexual abuse; and
  - forensic interviewing of children.
- To develop a forensic interview protocol for social workers to facilitate a disclosure of child sexual abuse victims in the middle childhood.
- To develop a checklist, containing all the fundamentals included in the seven-phase forensic interview protocol, in order to evaluate interviews conducted in both the experimental and comparison groups.
- To implement the forensic interview protocol with ten girls in the middle childhood who were allegedly sexually abused and evaluate by means of the self-developed checklist.
- To evaluate an independent social worker's interviews with ten girls in the middle childhood who were allegedly sexually abused, by means of the self-developed checklist.
- To evaluate the protocol.
- To make recommendations for further utilisation of the protocol by social workers.

### 6.2.3 Hypothesis

The hypothesis for this study was as follows:

**If this interview protocol will be applied in cases of alleged sexual abuse against children of the middle childhood, it would facilitate the disclosure in a more legally acceptable and defensible manner.**

### 6.2.4 Research approach and type of research

The researcher's motivation for this study stemmed from the present problematic situation as experienced in practice, namely that there is no legally defensible, structured forensic interview protocol to be used by social workers when interviewing child victims of alleged sexual abuse.

A quantitative study can be defined as an inquiry into a social or human problem, based on testing a theory consisting out of variables, measured with numbers and analysed with statistical procedures, in order to determine whether the predictive generalisations of the theory hold true (De Vos, 2002:79). The quantitative approach is more formalised, as well as more explicitly controlled than the qualitative approach, with a range that is defined more exactly and relatively close to the physical sciences (Mouton & Marais, 1990:155-160; Vermeulen, 1998:13).

The following will be covered in the quantitative approach:

- A seven-phase forensic interview protocol was developed after a thorough literature study, consultations with experts and extensive experience of the researcher within the field of forensic interviewing. A self-developed checklist as measuring instrument, with indicators representing a legally defensible interview protocol, was used.
- The seven-phase forensic interview protocol was applied with the experimental group and evaluated by means of the self-developed checklist (Appendix 5). Data collection methods for researchers working from a



quantitative approach can be categorised into questionnaires, checklists, indexes and scales. A checklist consists of a list of items. A checkmark is made after each individual item on the list (Leedy, 1985:144-145).

- A comparison group, conducted by an independent social worker, was exposed to a different interview protocol and evaluated against the same checklist. The interviews with respondents in the comparison group were conducted by a social worker from the Teddy Bear Clinic in Johannesburg. This social worker has extensive experience in social work and did undergo specialised training in the field of forensic interviewing. She represents the majority of social workers in the field of social work, confronted with child sexual abuse on a daily basis, and who conducts interviews as they deem fit.
- The results were compared to assess whether the seven-phase forensic interview protocol could be implemented; and whether the fundamentals in each cluster and seven different phases have not already been implemented in practice.
- The seven-phase forensic interview protocol consists of 119 fundamentals, categorised in 23 clusters. The content of each cluster was discussed in paragraph 5.4. On the checklist, each fundamental was evaluated according to specific criteria as discussed during data analysis of each cluster. The six categories were discussed in paragraph 5.2.2 and also in paragraph 6.3.1.
- The purpose of comparing the experimental and comparison groups was to determine whether the proposed seven-phase forensic interview protocol could indeed be implemented in the manner proposed. Furthermore it had to be determined whether the seven phases are currently included in social workers' approach when conducting forensic interviews, and which of the proposed fundamentals are integrated in current practice. The researcher categorised the different fundamentals and clusters into seven phases, after which the Department of Statistics of the University of Pretoria completed the comparisons.
- Those phases and fundamentals which were identified to be implementable, but are not currently used in practice would then be suggested as a contribution to the social work profession. Although each fundamental has

been evaluated individually, the 119 fundamentals were grouped into 23 clusters to simplify the statistical data analysis process.

- The results of the empirical research are presented in graphs as compiled by the Department of Statistics of the University of Pretoria. Tables were also drawn to explain data.

### **6.2.5 Research design**

The quasi-experimental design was applied. The comparison group post-test-only design has a built-in capacity for comparison of the results of two groups, equivalent to the experimental and control groups in true experiments. In the comparison group post-test-only design, one group was the experimental group, which was exposed to the independent variable X (newly developed seven-phase forensic interview protocol) (Leedy, 1985:211; Kerlinger & Lee, 2000:537). The other group, the comparison group, was not exposed to X (newly developed seven-phase forensic interview protocol). Sampling was purposive and not random (Fouché & De Vos, 2002:144; Strydom & Venter, 2002:207).

In this study, both the experimental group and the comparison group were evaluated by means of the self-developed checklist to determine whether the seven-phase forensic interview protocol (X) is legally defensible (O<sub>1</sub>).

- Experimental group: X (seven-phase forensic Interview protocol) and O<sub>1</sub> (fundamentals imperative for a legally defensible forensic interview were assessed by means of a self-developed checklist).
- Comparison group: O<sub>1</sub> (fundamentals imperative for a legally defensible forensic interview were assessed by means of a self-developed checklist).

The comparison group was conducted by a social worker from the Teddy Bear Clinic in Johannesburg, who also has extensive experience in forensic interviewing of child sexual abuse victims and acted as expert in criminal courts on numerous accounts. She also conducted interviews with ten children of the same ages as the children from the experimental group. All interviews were audio-recorded and

the researcher evaluated the application of forensic interviewing fundamentals (O<sub>1</sub>) with a self-developed checklist. The independent variable (X) was not applied during interviews in the comparison group. A randomly selected 50% of the interviews were independently coded by another professional for the purposes of inter-rater reliability.

### 6.2.6 Selection of respondents

The universum of this research was: **All children in South Africa who are alleged to have been sexually abused.** The research population for the experimental group consisted of all the children in the middle childhood years who have been reported to Child Welfare Vereeniging and NG Welsyn Vereeniging due to allegations of child sexual abuse in the period February 2006 to April 2007. Criminal charges were also filed in some of the cases.

The research population for the comparison group consisted of all children in the middle childhood years who have been reported to the Teddy Bear Clinic in Johannesburg by either the South African Police Service or welfare organisations in the Johannesburg area.

The researcher and the social worker from the comparison group made use of purposive sampling. Thirteen children were selected purposively from the mentioned organisations and referred to the researcher. Three of these children were included in the pilot study and ten were included in the experimental group. The children were selected according to certain criteria as explained in paragraph 1.9.4.1. The social worker from the comparison group selected ten children according to the same criteria. See paragraph 1.12 for reasons why only ten children for each group were selected.

The following criteria for referring children were given to the head of office from Child Welfare Vereeniging, NG Welsyn Vereeniging and the social worker from the comparison group at the Teddy Bear Clinic in Johannesburg:

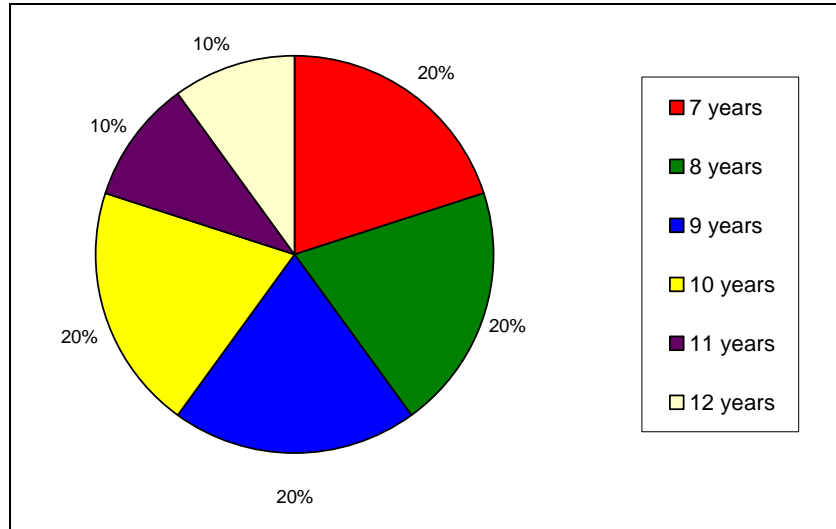


- **Experimental group**
  - Female.
  - 7 – 12 years old.
  - Afrikaans and/or English speaking.
  - Reported to offices for possible sexual abuse (with or without a criminal case being filed).
  - Time of reporting between February 2006 and April 2007.
  - Interviews audio-recorded.
  - Children without any developmental difficulties like ADHD or speech problems
  - Children who have not been assessed before
  -
  
- **Comparison group**
  - Female.
  - 7 – 12 years (precisely the same ages as the experimental group).
  - Afrikaans and/or English speaking.
  - Reported to the offices of Teddy Bear Clinic, Johannesburg for possible sexual abuse (with or without a criminal case being filed).
  - Time of reporting between July 2006 and July 2007.
  - Interviews audio-recorded.
  - Children without any developmental difficulties like ADHD or speech problems
  - Children who have not been assessed before

Ten children were interviewed in the experimental group and ten were interviewed in the comparison group. The children in both the experimental and comparison groups were girls of exactly the same ages. In each group two children in each of the age groups 7 years, 8 years, 9 years and 10 years were interviewed, as well as one 10-year-old and one 11-year-old. Figure 6.1 illustrates the composition of both the groups.



**Figure 6.1: Ages of the children interviewed in experimental and comparison groups**



## 6.2.7 Ethical issues

Several ethical aspects were taken into consideration:

### 6.2.7.1 *Informed consent*

In chapter one the researcher discussed ethical aspects concerning informed consent (refer to paragraph 1.9.2). Written consent was obtained from all the respondents, and their parents (Appendix 3), the social worker of the comparison group and her supervisor (Appendix 2), and the Research Proposal and Ethical Committee of the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Pretoria gave their approval for the study (Appendix 4).

### 6.2.7.2 *Harm to experimental and comparison respondents*

As discussed in chapter one (paragraph 1.9.1), both the researcher and the social worker from the comparison group ensured that the children were not subjected to

secondary trauma. This was done by accommodating each child's process and not using any method that could imply guilt on the child or batter the child in the sense that she would feel that she is being punished for the alleged abuse. Both the social worker and researcher ensured that each child was contained before leaving the interview room by applying non-leading empowerment activities. All children were referred for therapy either to private practitioners or to local hospitals at the mental health services. Referral letters were written where requested.

#### **6.2.7.3 *Violation of privacy / anonymity / confidentiality***

The researcher explained the importance of confidentiality in paragraph 1.9.3. Confidentiality and privacy were maintained at all times. All information obtained during interviews were put in a forensic social work report form; only to be viewed by referring social workers and relevant role players in the criminal justice system. For the purpose of the research, the respondents were each allocated a number e.g. "exp 1" or "comp 1". Audio-recordings, completed checklists and data sheets were labelled accordingly and are at all times in safekeeping till needed.

#### **6.2.7.4 *Release of publication of the findings***

The researcher's report was written as objectively and accurately as possible (refer to paragraph 1.9.6). All shortcomings and errors were admitted. Two articles to be published in professionals' journals will be submitted before submission of the final thesis.

#### **6.2.8 *Validity and reliability of measuring instruments***

According to Fouché (2002:120), when original measuring instruments are to be constructed, the researcher must give a detailed account of the procedures to be employed in constructing them. The validity and reliability of the instruments must also be discussed.

### **6.2.8.1 Validity**

A valid measuring instrument does what it is intended to do, namely measure what it is supposed to measure. With the help of the Department of Statistics of the University of Pretoria, the researcher took the following into consideration whilst developing the measuring instrument for this study, namely the checklist:

- Is the instrument really measuring the content?
- Does the instrument provide an adequate sample of items that represent that concept?

### **6.2.8.2 Reliability**

Reliability generally refers to the extent to which independent administration of the same instrument consistently yields the same results under comparable conditions. Reliability is therefore concerned with how well something is measured (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995:130-134). The researcher took the following into consideration:

- Repeatability, i.e. can the same instrument be used on the same group of people on two or more occasions?
- Can an equivalent of the instrument be used?
- Linearity – internal consistency of the instrument.

Content analysis was done in the form of quantitative analysis of the behaviour of the interviewers. Behaviour in this content would refer to questions asked, the process of asking questions and conduct in the form of neutral encouragements.

### **6.2.8.3 Inter-rater reliability**

For the purposes of inter-rater reliability a randomly selected 50% of the interviews were independently coded by Advocate Renate Carstens. As an ex- social worker

Adv. Carstens has extensive experience and advanced knowledge on the fundamentals included in the seven-phase forensic interview protocol.

All data were submitted to the Department of Statistics of the University Pretoria. A comparison was made between the researcher's and the independent coder's rating of fundamentals. An average agreement of 82.8% was found.

### **6.3 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS: SECTION OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH**

Data collection formed part of phase five of the intervention research process and of objective five.

#### **6.3.1 Development of the seven-phase forensic interview protocol and checklist**

In this phase a thorough literature study and consultation with experts, together with extensive experience from the researcher in this field, formed part of the knowledge base in order for the researcher to develop a checklist and the seven-phase forensic interview protocol.

##### **6.3.1.1 Coding of interviewer behaviour**

In conjunction with each of the items in the checklist, a set of criteria was constructed that clearly defined the interviewer behaviour to be evaluated by means of a self-developed checklist. As discussed in paragraph 5.2.2, different criteria were identified in order to evaluate whether a specific fundamental was complied with or not during an interview:

- If the interviewer complied with what is expected of her according to the proposed interview protocol, a "yes" was indicated on the checklist for every time a specific individual fundamental was adhered to.
- If "no" was indicated, the researcher differentiated between "no – effective", "no – ineffective" and "no – material mistake": The researcher has determined beforehand which items if not complied with constitute a rating of "no – effective"; "no – ineffective" and "no – material mistake". The researcher has thus rated the fundamentals consistently for both the comparison and experimental groups.
  - In the category "no – effective" it means that although the specific fundamental was not complied with as proposed, the interview was still effective or the specific item on the checklist was addressed in another way than proposed, e.g. using pronouns or multiple choice questions.
  - The category "no – ineffective" indicates that the specific fundamental was not probed, explored or adhered to as proposed by the researcher, and the absence of that in the interview, addressed that specific fundamental ineffectively. However, the ineffective handling of the specific item, e.g. not using pictures, did not cause contamination of or did not have serious implications on the outcome of the interview.
  - The last category under "no" is "no – material mistake", which indicates that the presence of that specific interviewer behaviour may lead to contamination of information, or result in the interview not being legally defensible. Examples of such interviewer behaviour include the asking of leading questions, not exploring the identity of the alleged perpetrator, or not exploring the specific alleged sexual behaviour that occurred.
- Another category, "volunteered" was added after the pilot study had been conducted. This was used to indicate cases where the children volunteered information without the interviewer probing it.
- A last category was also added after the pilot study, namely that if a specific fundamental was not applicable in a specific situation, it was indicated as "not applicable" on the checklist, e.g. when anatomical dolls were not utilised in the interview, it would be coded "not applicable". This would accommodate situations where the interviewer did not use anatomical dolls

and did not ask questions about explicit knowledge, or contextual information that was irrelevant to the specific case.

Each time when either the interviewer from the comparison or the experimental groups has covered a particular fundamental, a score of 1 was given. When the particular fundamental has not been covered, it was marked on the checklist as either "no –effective", "no – ineffective" or "no – material mistake". Based on this data the statisticians then determined whether or not a particular fundamental has been successfully addressed.

As already discussed, the data were submitted to the Department of Statistics at the University of Pretoria to do the statistical analysis.

#### **6.3.1.2 Pilot testing**

The seven-phase forensic interview protocol and self-developed checklist were pilot-tested with three children who were referred to the researcher for forensic assessment interviews, and did not form part of the main investigation. After the pilot study the categories, "volunteered" and "not applicable" were added, as well as criteria for when an item constitute a rating of "no – ineffective"; "no – effective" and "no– material mistake". The researcher then also excluded the following fundamentals as the interviewer used audio-recordings and these fundamentals could not be assessed without video-recordings: "follow-up of nonverbal behaviour" using SOLER skills, nodding and avoiding suggestive actions. However, these fundamentals are proposed to be part of the seven-phase forensic interview protocol.

#### **6.3.1.3 Experimental and comparison groups**

Ten children who were referred by social workers were chosen for the experimental group. The social worker from the comparison group then selected ten children according to the given criteria. The social worker from the comparison group was orientated regarding ethical issues and informed consent. The

researcher has also corresponded regularly with the social worker from the comparison group in order to ensure that the ages of the children correlated.

During phase five of intervention research (paragraph 1.7.5) the self-developed checklist was implemented during ten forensic interviews conducted with children who have allegedly been sexually abused. The comparison group was interviewed by a social worker in Johannesburg at the Teddy Bear Clinic. The ten children in the comparison group were of the same age and gender as the experimental group. Cases were included in the study if there were substantial reasons to believe that abuse had taken place.

The newly developed seven-phase forensic interview protocol was used in all interviews in the experimental group.

#### **6.3.1.4 Audio-recordings**

Audio-recordings of the interviews were checked to ensure their completeness and accuracy. Audio-recordings of the interviews in both the experimental group and the comparison group were examined and coded using the self-developed checklist (paragraph 5.2.2).

The audio-recordings were collected from the comparison group as soon as the interviews were conducted.

#### **6.3.1.5 Independent coding**

The independent coder was trained in using the checklist before coding the audio-recordings for the study.

During the course of coding 50% of the transcripts were independently coded by the independent coder to ensure reliability. The data were submitted to the

Department of Statistics at the University of Pretoria to determine the percentage of agreement. As already mentioned, the average agreement was 82.8%.

## 6.4 DATA ANALYSIS: CLUSTERS

The seven-phase forensic interview protocol consists of 119 fundamentals, categorised in 23 clusters (paragraph 5.4). The 23 clusters are:

- Rapport-building and facilitation of initial verbal disclosure.
- Ground rules.
- Truth-and-lie check before abuse-focused questioning.
- Morality check.
- Truth-and-lie check after abuse-focused questioning.
- Use clear and age-appropriate language.
- Invite free narrative.
- Questioning format.
- Determine the number of times the alleged abuse happened.
- Use pictures to explore alleged abuse.
- Determine the identity of the perpetrator.
- Explore explicit accounts of sexual abuse.
- Determine context explanation.
- Emotional content.
- Explore the existence of internalisations.
- Observe and follow up on nonverbal behaviour. (Excluded from this research due to the fact that it could not be evaluated since only audio-recordings were used and not video-recordings.)
- Investigate multiple hypotheses.
- Use of anatomical dolls in a non-leading way.
- Test for consistency.
- The interviewer's overall conduct during interviews. (The following fundamentals were excluded from this research due to the fact that it could



not be evaluated since only audio-recordings were used and not video-recordings: SOLER skills, nodding and avoiding suggestive actions.)

- Practical arrangements during the interviews.
- Global check.
- Closure of interview.

After the self-developed checklist has been completed by the researcher and independently coded by another professional, the data were submitted to the Department of Statistics at the University of Pretoria, who conducted the statistical analyses. The results obtained are presented graphically.

The Mann-Whitney test was used in order to determine the p-value. The p-value is often called the level of significance. The p-value can be used to make the decision in a hypothesis test by noting that if the p-value is less than  $\alpha$ , the hypothesis is rejected. The Department of Statistics of the University of Pretoria use the level of significance as  $\alpha = 0.05$  as it is the most commonly used level of significance in practice. In this study, if the p-value was  $< 0.05$  there was a significant difference between the experimental and the comparison group. If the p-value was  $> 0.05$ , it shows that there was no significant difference between the two groups.

#### **6.4.1 Rapport-building and facilitation of initial verbal disclosure**

As discussed in paragraph 5.4.1.1 rapport-building is part of phase one and consists of activities to familiarise the child with the interviewer and interviewing environment (Wakefield, 2006). The researcher proposed a semi-structured questionnaire (paragraph 4.6.6.1).

After rapport has been established the interviewer would then make use of play-related communication techniques (Fouché & Joubert, 2003:17) to facilitate the initial verbal disclosure (paragraph 4.6.6). It should, however, be noted that the first part of rapport-building was not part of this research (paragraph 5.4.1.3). This research started only when the child gave an initial verbal disclosure; most of the

times through using a label for the alleged sexual abuse (paragraph 5.4.1.4). If the child disclosed the abuse by means of referring to a label, it had to be clarified before the interviewer could continue (Fouché, 2006:225), which then would be the fundamental that would be evaluated.

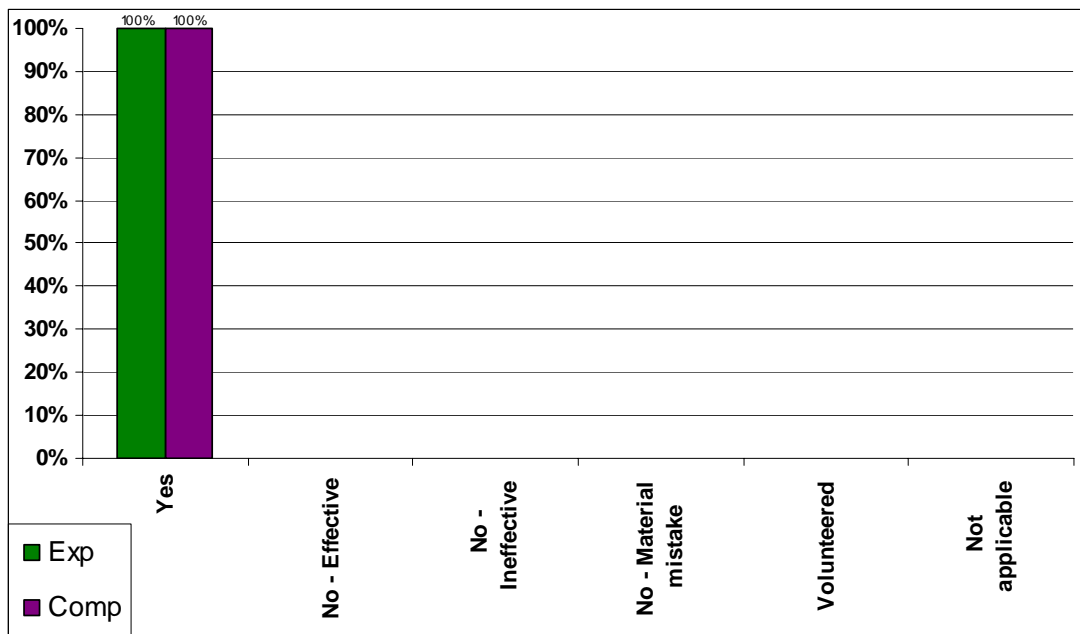
#### **6.4.1.1 Coding: Rapport-building and facilitation of initial verbal disclosure**

If the interviewer did not clarify the label used by the child for the alleged sexual abuse, it was coded as "no – material mistake". If the interviewer complied as proposed by the seven-phase forensic interview protocol by clarifying the label or expression used by the child for the alleged sexual abuse, a "yes" was indicated on the checklist.

#### **6.4.1.2 Results and discussion: Rapport-building and facilitation of initial verbal disclosure**

Figure 6.2 shows that professionals in both the experimental group and the comparison group have complied 100% in each of their ten cases with what is proposed by the seven-phase forensic interview protocol regarding the rapport-building phase. There is no difference between the experimental and comparison groups in terms of rapport-building and facilitation of the initial verbal disclosure, and therefore the researcher suggests that this specific cluster appears not to be a new tendency among South African social workers as it was part of the social worker from the comparison group's protocol.

**Figure 6.2: Rapport-building**



#### 6.4.2 Ground rules

As discussed in paragraph 4.6.7 ground rules, are aspects covered directly after the rapport-building, facilitation of the first initial disclosure and clarification of the label the child is referring to.

The ground rules consist of informing the child that:

- the interviewer is going to ask questions about the alleged sexual abuse and that it is important to tell everything;
- he/she may resist answering questions;
- he/she may indicate when he/she cannot remember or does not know the answer;
- he/she may ask questions at any time in the interview; and
- that he/she must correct the interviewer if she reflects the information incorrectly.

These ground rules must then each be tested with a neutral topic to ensure that the child understands.

### 6.4.2.1 Coding: Ground rules

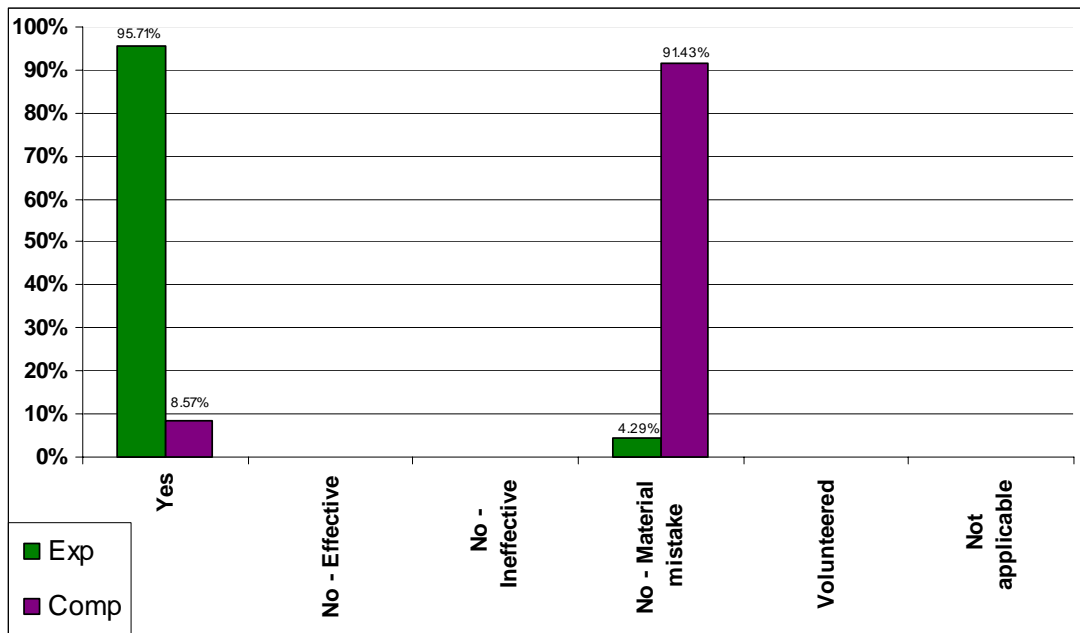
If the interviewer did not do the ground rules with the child, it was regarded as "no – material mistake" as it is instrumental in making the forensic interview legally defensible. If it was done correctly, a code of "yes" was given.

### 6.4.2.2 Results and discussion: Ground rules

From figure 6.3 it is evident that the interviewer from the experimental group has complied 95.71% with this cluster of fundamentals, compared to the interviewer from the comparison group who only complied 8.57%.

The statistics suggest that the ground rules are not done in a structured way in practice, leaving a situation where a child may answer questions that he/she does not know the answer of, or may be too scared or shy to correct the interviewer when she misunderstands.

**Figure 6.3 : Ground rules**



The Mann-Whitney test was conducted and the p-value for the cluster "ground rules" equalled 0.0001 (<0.05). Therefore there is a statistically significant difference between the comparison and experimental groups. This means that the ground rules are indeed implementable as proposed by the seven-phase forensic interview protocol and suggests to be a contribution to the social work profession in South Africa.

### **6.4.3 Truth-and-lie check before abuse-focused questioning**

The seven-phase forensic interview protocol proposes that it is imperative that the interviewer conducts a truth-and-lie check before abuse-focused questioning starts. The child's understanding of this needs to be tested with neutral topics, after which the child should be informed to tell the truth.

#### **6.4.3.1 Coding: Truth-and-lie check before abuse-focused questioning**

If the interviewers from either the experimental or comparisons groups did not comply with the above-mentioned fundamental, it was coded "no – material mistake". Hypothetically it can be argued that by leaving this fundamental out of the protocol, the interviews are not legally defensible, because the child was not made aware that he/she should tell the truth.

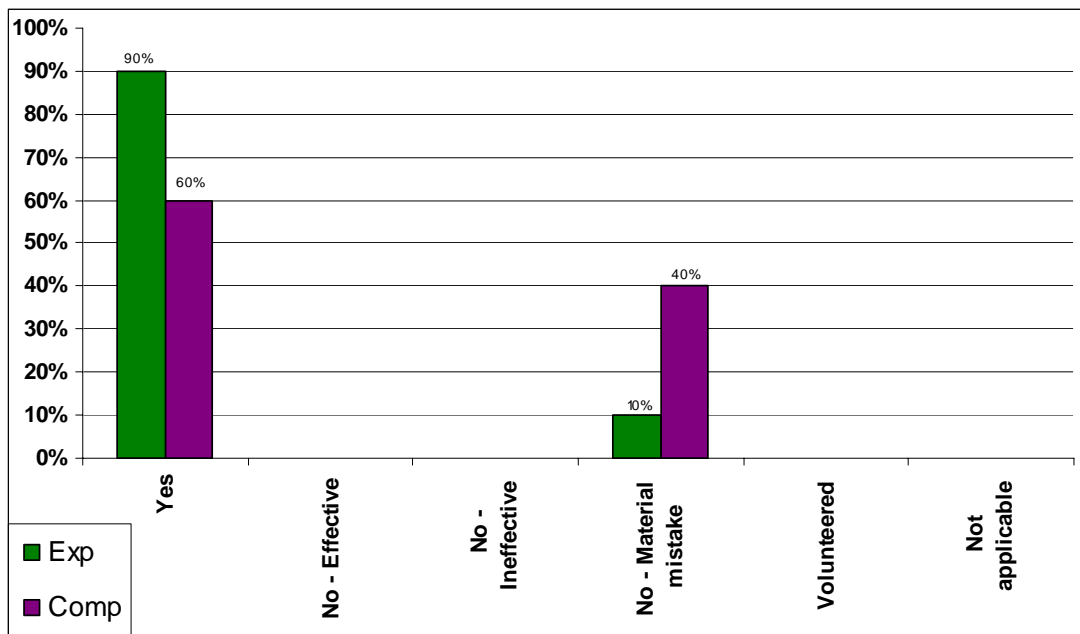
#### **6.4.3.2 Results and discussion: Truth-and-lie check before abuse-focused questioning**

Figure 6.4 indicates that the interviewer from the comparison group complied by conducting a truth-and-lie test in six cases (60%), but not in four cases (40%). Although the truth-and-lie test has been conducted in six cases (60%), it was not tested with neutral topics in any of the ten cases (100%) and the children were not informed to tell the truth.

In nine cases (90%) the interviewer from the experimental group did conduct a truth-and-lie test before the abuse-focused questioning started. In all nine cases (90%), the children's understanding was tested with neutral topics and the children were informed to tell the truth. In one case (10%) the interviewer of the experimental group did not follow the proposed forensic interview protocol.

The results of the comparison group suggest that social workers are generally aware of the importance of a truth-and-lie check, but are unaware of the fact that it should be tested with neutral topics, and that the child should be informed to tell the truth. It also proves that although the interviewer of the experimental group was aware of the importance of a truth-and-lie check, she failed to do so in one case. Leading to the conclusion that one should not assume that when professionals are aware of the correct procedures that they would necessarily adhere to it.

**Figure 6.4: Truth-and-lie check before abuse-focused questioning**



According to the Mann-Whitney test, the p-value for cluster "truth-and-lie check before abuse-focused questioning", equalled 0.0293 (< 0.05) and therefore there

is a statistically significant difference between the comparison and experimental groups.

#### **6.4.4 Morality check**

The purpose of a morality check, as explained in paragraph 4.6.25, is to ensure that the child knows that lying has serious consequences for the people involved. The morality check should be conducted after the ground rules and the truth-and-lie check. This is also something that is done in South African courts before a child testifies.

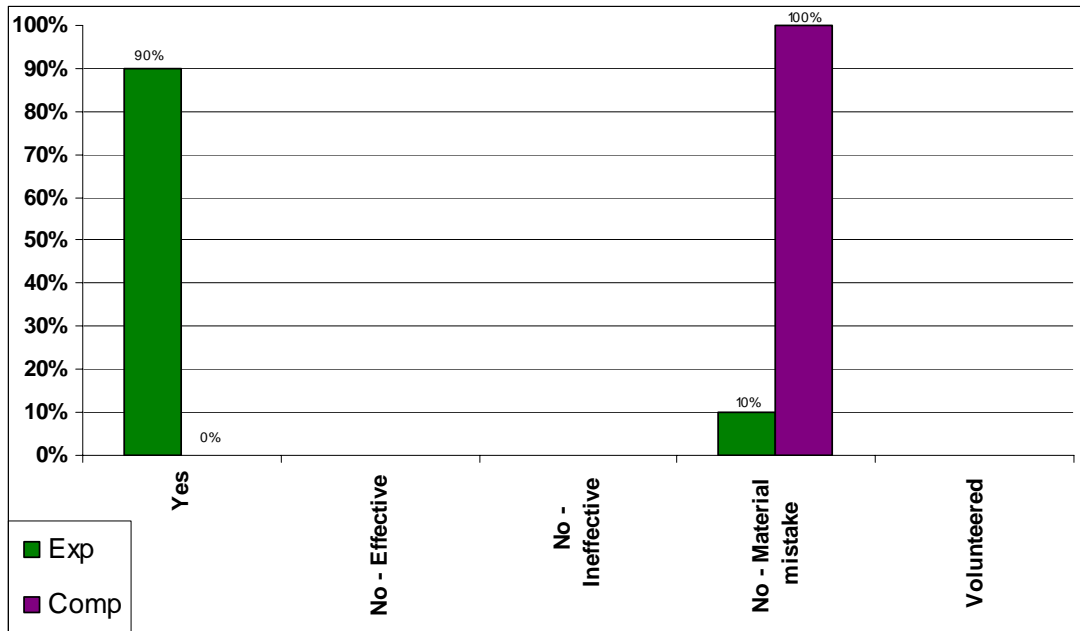
##### **6.4.4.1 Coding: Morality check**

The morality check is regarded as imperative and if the interviewer did not comply with it, it was coded as "no – material mistake". If it was done correctly in the interview a "yes" was indicated.

##### **6.4.4.2 Results and discussion: Morality check**

As seen in figure 6.5, the interviewer from the experimental group complied 90% with the proposed interview protocol in terms of the morality check, while the interviewer from the comparison group did not conduct a morality check at all. This suggests that social workers in the field do not know that they have to conduct a morality check before interviewing a child. This may have a detrimental impact as children need to be reminded of what the consequences of lying could be.

**Figure 6.5: Morality check**



The Mann-Whitney test was conducted and the p-value for cluster: "morality check" was 0.0001 (<0.05), and therefore there is a statistically significant difference between the comparison and experimental groups.

#### **6.4.5 Truth-and-lie check after abuse-focused questioning**

The seven-phase forensic interview protocol proposes that the interviewer again asks the child after the abuse-focused questioning whether he/she has told the truth, or lied about anything that he/she has told the interviewer (paragraph 4.6.25).

##### **6.4.5.1 Coding: Truth-and-lie check after abuse-focused questioning**

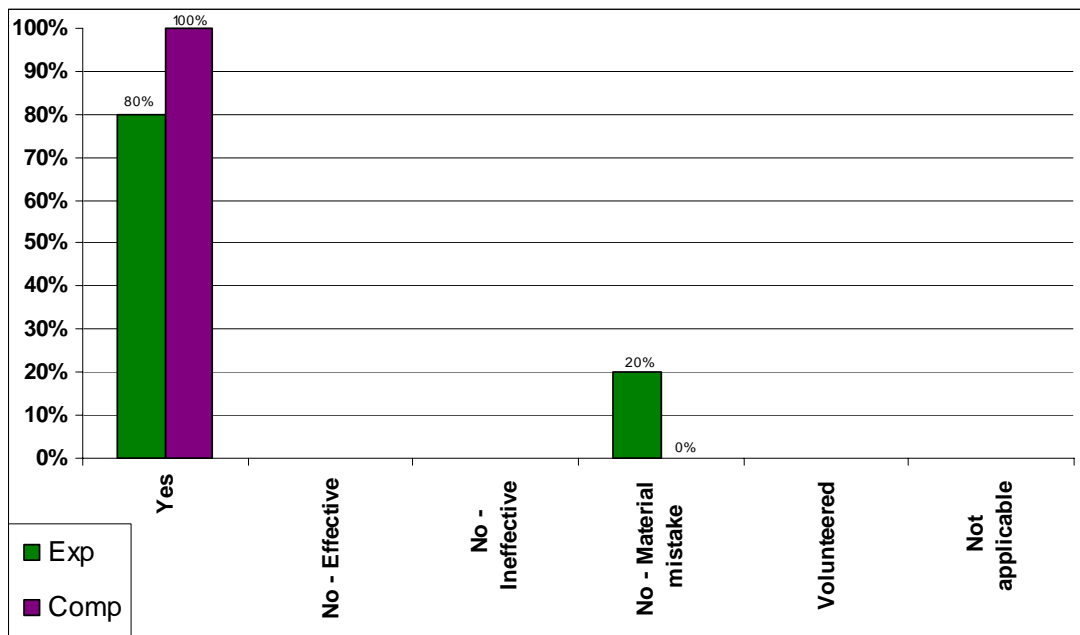
By not conducting a truth-and-lie check after abuse-focussed questioning, it was coded as "no – material mistake" as this is according to the proposed interview protocol regarded as imperative in the forensic interviewing process.



### 6.4.5.2 Results and discussion: Truth-and-lie check after abuse-focused questioning

In figure 6.6 it is shown that the interviewer of the comparison group has done the truth-and-lie check after the abuse-focused questions in all ten cases (100%), and the interviewer from the experimental group has done it correctly only in eight cases (80%). Although the interviewer from the comparison group did not conduct a truth-and-lie test before the abuse-focused questioning, she managed to do it afterwards. It would appear that social workers in practice know the importance of asking a child whether he/she is telling the truth. The results from the experimental group show that if a truth-and-lie test was done earlier in a session, it could very easily happen that the interviewer forgets to do the test again.

Figure 6.6: Truth and lie check after abuse-focused questioning



The Mann-Whitney test was conducted and the p-value for cluster "truth-and-lie check after abuse-focused questioning" equalled 0.1462 ( $>0.05$ ) and therefore there is not a statistically significant difference between the comparison group and experimental group.

#### **6.4.6 Use clear and age-appropriate language**

The use of age-appropriate language was discussed in paragraph 3.8. The following language-related aspects are included in the seven-phase forensic interview protocol and regarded as an imperative part of the interviewing process:

- Avoid legal words and phrases (paragraph 3.8.1.1).
- Clarify labels, concepts, instructions (paragraph 4.6.22) and continue with the labels which the child used (paragraph 4.6.22).
- Use pronouns selectively (paragraph 3.8.2.1).
- Avoid double negatives (paragraph 3.8.2.1).
- Avoid vague referents (paragraph 3.8.2.1).
- Avoid using "why" questions (paragraph 4.6.19).
- Keep questions and sentences simple (paragraph 3.8.2.1).
- One main thought per utterance (paragraph 3.8.2.1).
- Avoid questions beginning with "do you remember" (paragraph 3.8.1.1).
- Avoid questions with auxiliary verbs (paragraph 3.8.1.1).
- Use as few negatives as possible (paragraph 3.8.2.1).

##### **6.4.6.1 Coding: Use clear and age-appropriate language**

When an interviewer did not comply with the above-mentioned aspects, it was coded as follows: The code "no – material mistake" was indicated in cases where information offered by the child has been contaminated, or questioning led to confusion of the child. Otherwise it would either be coded as "no effective" or "no – ineffective", indicating that the interviewer did not comply, but the manner in which the interviewer acted was effective or ineffective, but did not have a detrimental impact on the outcome of the interview. Due to the fact that more than one coding was given for certain fundamentals in order to determine what the overall compliance during the whole interview was, the specific number of cases cannot be indicated.

#### **6.4.6.2 Results and discussion: Use clear and age-appropriate language**

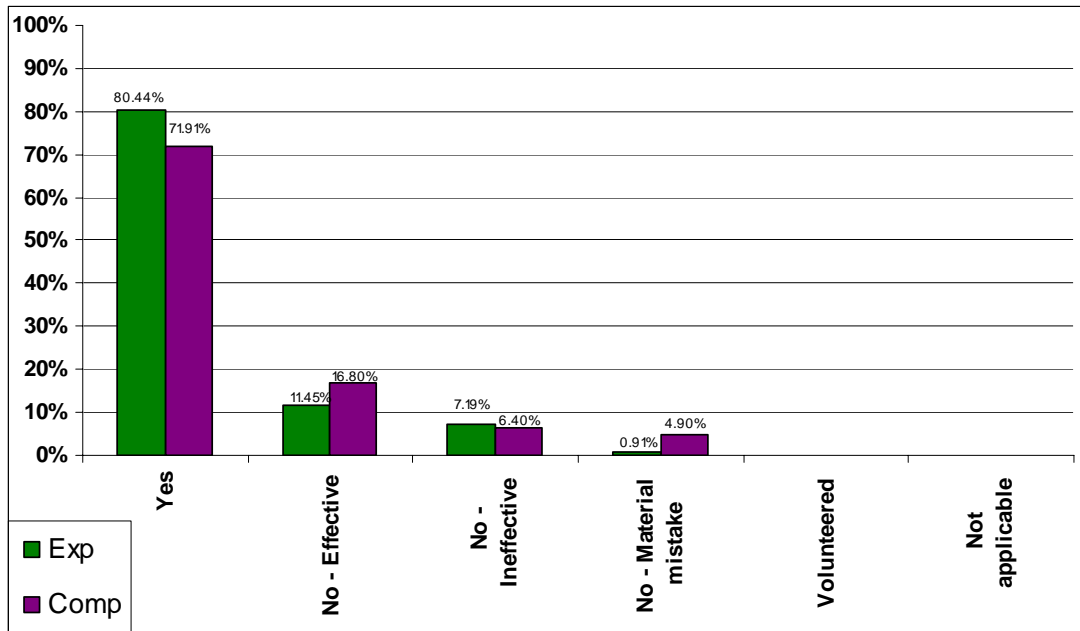
In the experimental group, as seen in figure 6.7, the interviewer scored an overall compliance rating of 80.45% for using clear and age-appropriate language, compared to the 71.9% of the comparison group. The ineffective use of age-appropriate language was 6.4% in the experimental group and 7.19% in the comparison group.

Not using age-appropriate language correctly, but still effectively was 11.45% in the experimental group and 16.80% in the comparison group. Especially the use of pronouns in both the experimental and comparison groups was problematic, as the interviewers did not avoid the use of pronouns. However, the children could still clearly understand to which person or situation the interviewer referred to when using pronouns.

The use of age-appropriate language in a way that is considered "no – material mistake" was scored 4.9% in the comparison group and 0.91% in the experimental group. This included mostly the use of double negative sentences and the asking of "why" questions.

Both interviewers mostly used language correctly, but there were also instances where both interviewers did not comply 100% with the requirements of the proposed seven-phase forensic interview protocol.

**Figure 6.7 Use clear and age-appropriate language**



After conducting the Mann-Whitney test the p-value for this cluster was calculated as 0.494 (<0.05) and therefore there is not a statistically significant difference between the comparison and the experimental groups.

#### 6.4.7 Invite free narrative

In paragraph 4.6.8 it was suggested that after a child has disclosed alleged sexual abuse, the label which he/she used when disclosing should be clarified, and the interviewer should then invite free narrative before questioning starts.

##### 6.4.7.1 Coding: Invite free narrative

If the interviewer did not invite free narrative after the initial disclosure, it was coded "no – material mistake" as the child was not given an opportunity to provide information from his/her own frame of reference. However, if the interviewer did ask an open-ended question in a way which still facilitated a free narrative, it was coded "no – effective". When specific non-leading questions were posed to obtain

initial information, it was coded "no – ineffective. If close-ended, multiple questions or leading questions were asked to obtain information from the child it was also coded "no – material mistake".

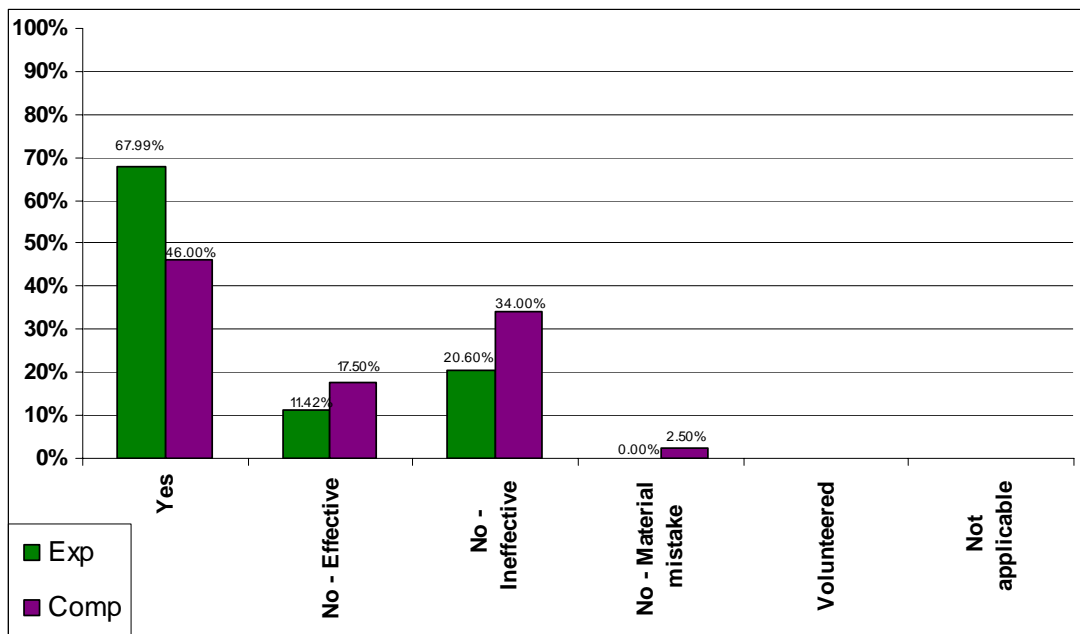
#### **6.4.7.2 Results and discussion: Invite free narrative**

Figure 6.8 indicates that in 46% of the cases, the interviewer from the comparison group invited free narrative correctly. In 17.5% of the cases the interviewer from the comparison group did not handle free narrative correctly, but still effectively, and in 34% of the cases it was not handled effectively. In 2.5% of the cases, the interviewer from the comparison group did not invite free narrative, or probed by means of open-ended or specific non-leading specific questions. She used close-ended or multiple questions, which are not allowed within the proposed seven-phase forensic interview protocol.

In 67.99% of the cases the interviewer from the experimental group invited free narrative correctly as proposed by the newly developed protocol. In 11.41% of the cases the interviewer from the experimental group did not invite free narrative as proposed, but the manner in which she probed for information was effective. In 20.60% of the cases the interviewer from the experimental group probed ineffectively for information by using specific non-leading questions to obtain information. The interviewer from the experimental group did not use any close-ended, multiple- or leading questions during the free narrative phase.

It suggests that in practice social workers invite free narrative less than half of the times that they conduct forensic interviews. Although the proposed protocol prescribes that interviewers must invite a free narrative at the beginning of the interview, the interviewer of the experimental group did not follow the guidelines 100%. Both interviewers asked open-ended questions and specific non-leading questions to explore further, instead of saying to the child "tell me everything".

**Figure 6.8 Invite free narrative**



The Mann-Whitney test was conducted and the p-value for the cluster "invite free narrative" was 0.0184 (<0.05) and therefore there is a statistically significant difference between the comparison and experimental group.

#### 6.4.8 Questioning format

The questioning format as proposed by the seven-phase forensic interview protocol is:

- Identify themes from the free narrative that must be discussed (paragraph 4.6.21).
- Introduce the topic or subject to be discussed (paragraph 4.6.21).
- Explore topics through non-leading abuse-focused questioning (paragraph 4.6.13 and 4.6.14).
- Summarise main themes (paragraph 4.6.21).
- Introduce new topic (paragraph 4.6.21).
- Use open-ended questions at all times (paragraph 4.6.12).
- Limit the use of multiple questions (paragraph 4.6.16);

- Avoid close-ended questions (paragraph 4.6.17),
- Avoid leading and suggestive questions (paragraph 4.6.18).
- Avoid repeating of questions as far as possible, unless it is used to assess consistency and is conducted in a sensitive manner (paragraph 4.6.20).

The questioning format is applicable right through the interview.

#### **6.4.8.1 Coding: Questioning format**

By following the fundamentals proposed by the seven-phase forensic interview protocol, a code "yes" was allocated to the specific item on the checklist that was correctly done.

The code "no – material mistake" was indicated if the following fundamental was not adhered to: asking leading, suggestive questions.

The codes "no – effective" or "no – ineffective" were used if the interviewer has not complied with the fundamentals mentioned, but the question format was still effective or ineffective, without contaminating the child's version (excluding those indicated which constituted a "no – material mistake" rating).

#### **6.4.8.2 Results and discussion: Questioning format**

In figure 6.9 it is marked that the interviewer of the comparison group has managed to conduct questioning correctly in 69.84% of the cases, not correctly but still effectively in 10.58% of the cases, and ineffectively in 15.90% of the cases.

In 78.04% of the cases the interviewer of the experimental group conducted the questioning format correctly, and in 7.68% of the cases the questioning format was done not correctly but still effectively. In 12.52% of the cases the questioning format was done ineffectively.

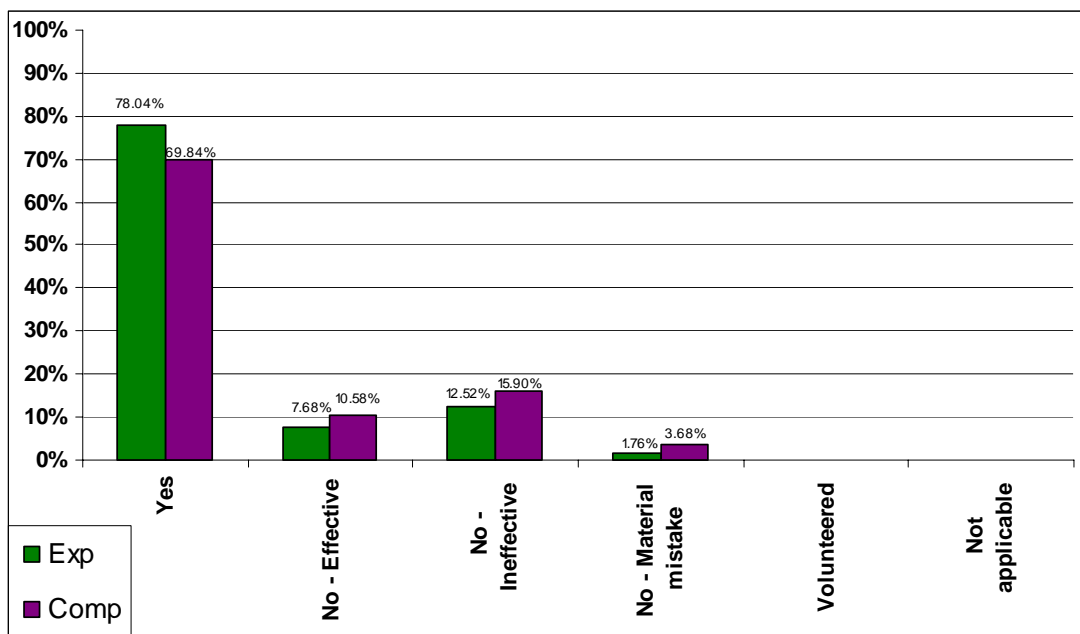
Items handled not correctly, but still effectively in both groups were that main thoughts were not summarised to the child and new topics were not introduced before questioning started.

Both interviewers used questions which are not allowed. In 3.68% of the cases the interviewer from the comparison group used leading, suggestive, close-ended and multiple questions. The interviewer from the experimental group used leading and close-ended questions in 1.76% of the cases.

It would appear that the questioning format as proposed by the researcher is not fully used in practice and should social workers utilise the proposed seven-phase forensic interview protocol, it should increase their questioning skills.

From the above it is also clear that although the researcher was aware of all the fundamentals, she also did not completely follow the proposed seven-phase forensic interview protocol.

**Figure 6.9: Questioning format**





The Mann-Whitney test was conducted and the p-value for the cluster "questioning format" equalled 0.0126 (<0.05), and therefore there is a statistically significant difference between the comparison and experimental groups.

#### **6.4.9 Determine the number of times the alleged abuse happened**

It is crucial for the legal proceedings in the criminal courts that the interviewer must attempt to determine how many times the alleged abuse took place (paragraph 3.8.4.1). The child will be asked whether the abuse happened "once or more than once".

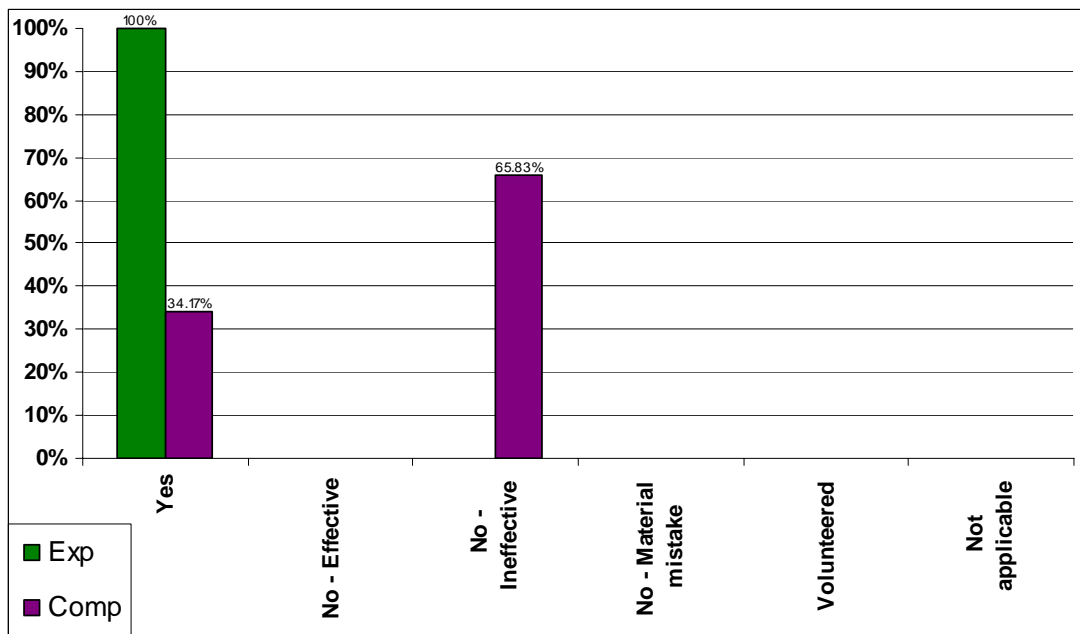
##### ***6.4.9.1 Coding: Determine the number of times the alleged abuse happened***

If the interviewer complied by using the manner proposed by the seven-phase forensic interview protocol, it was coded "yes". Failing to do so by attempting with other interviewing techniques to determine the number of times the alleged abuse happened resulted in a "no – ineffective" coding.

##### ***6.4.9.2 Results and discussion: Determine the number of times the alleged abuse happened***

From figure 6.10 it is evident that the interviewer from the comparison group only complied 34.17%, which shows that social workers in practice may as a rule not make use of this technique to determine the number of times that the alleged abuse happened. In the experimental group the interviewer has done it consistently as prescribed in the seven-phase forensic interview (100%), indicating that it is possible to implement this technique in practice.

**Figure 6.10: Determine the number of times the alleged abuse happened**



The Mann-Whitney test was conducted and the p-value for the cluster "determine the number of times the alleged sexual abuse happened" was 0.0000 (<0.05). Therefore there is a statistically significant difference between the comparison and experimental groups.

#### 6.4.10 Use pictures to explore alleged abuse

After the child has indicated whether the abuse happened once or more than once, the interviewer would ask the child to identify the different places, and blank pages would be labelled with the name of the venue(s) (paragraph 4.6.23). Hereafter the focus would be on one venue (labelled page) at a time. The child would be requested to close his/her eyes, think back to the happenings and draw a picture. After this exercise everything regarding the alleged incident should be explored.

#### 6.4.10.1 Coding: Use pictures to explore alleged abuse

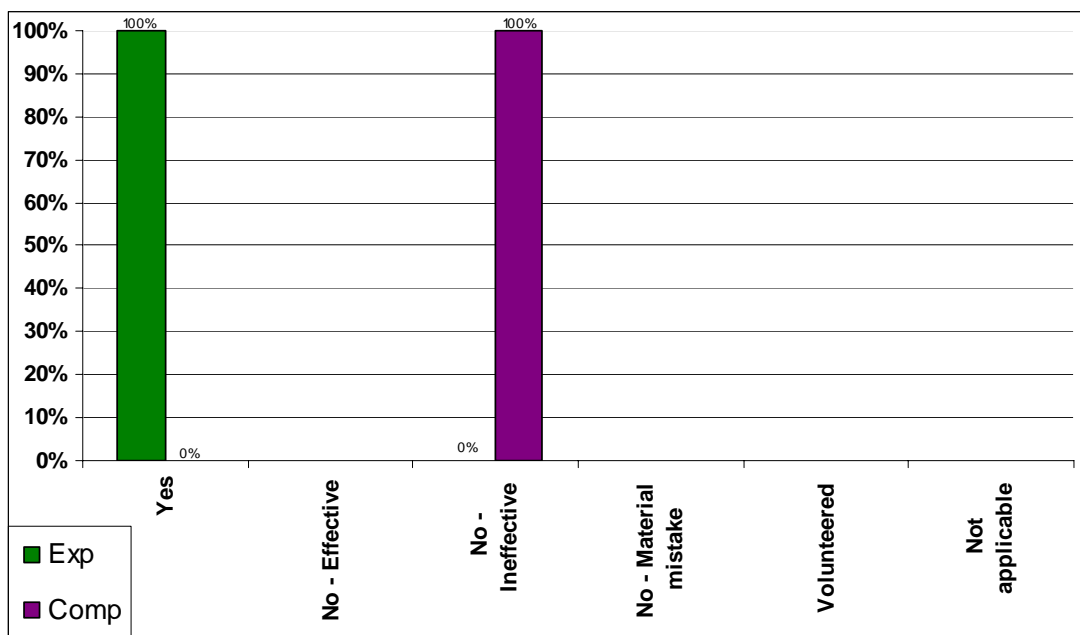
Due to the fact that thousands of interviews take place daily without using pictures it is only regarded as ineffective if the interviewer has not done so. Compliance as proposed by the seven-phase forensic interview protocol was coded "yes".

#### 6.4.10.2 Results and discussion: Use pictures to explore alleged abuse

From figure 6.11 it shows that pictures are possibly not commonly used in practice as the experimental group showed 0% compliance. The experimental group used pictures in all ten cases (100%). It also shows that it is possible to use pictures as proposed by the seven-phase forensic interview protocol.

The Mann-Whitney test was conducted and the p-value for cluster "use pictures to explore alleged abuse" was 0.0000 (<0.05), and therefore there is a statistically significant difference between the comparison and experimental group.

**Figure 6.11: Use pictures to explore alleged abuse**



#### **6.4.11 Determine the identity of the perpetrator**

To determine the identity of the alleged perpetrator in the context of a forensic assessment is crucial as discussed in paragraph 4.7.2.1. If a child does not voluntarily disclose who the alleged perpetrator is, the interviewer has to explore the identity of the perpetrator, as well as the relationship that the child has with the alleged perpetrator. It is imperative that it is explored by means of open-ended questions.

##### ***6.4.11.1 Coding: Determine the identity of the perpetrator***

If the interviewer has asked the child by means of open-ended questions about the identity of the alleged perpetrator after the child has verbally disclosed possible sexual abuse a "yes" code was given. If the child voluntarily disclosed the identity of the alleged perpetrator by means of play-related communication techniques, it was coded as "volunteered". When the interviewer did not determine the identity of the perpetrator during the interview, or used a leading or suggestive questions to determine the identity of the alleged perpetrator, it was regarded as "no – material mistake", implying that the interview was not legally defensible.

Due to the possibility of multiple perpetrators in both the experimental and comparison groups, the interviewers had to ask questions regarding the identity of the perpetrator more than once during certain interviews.

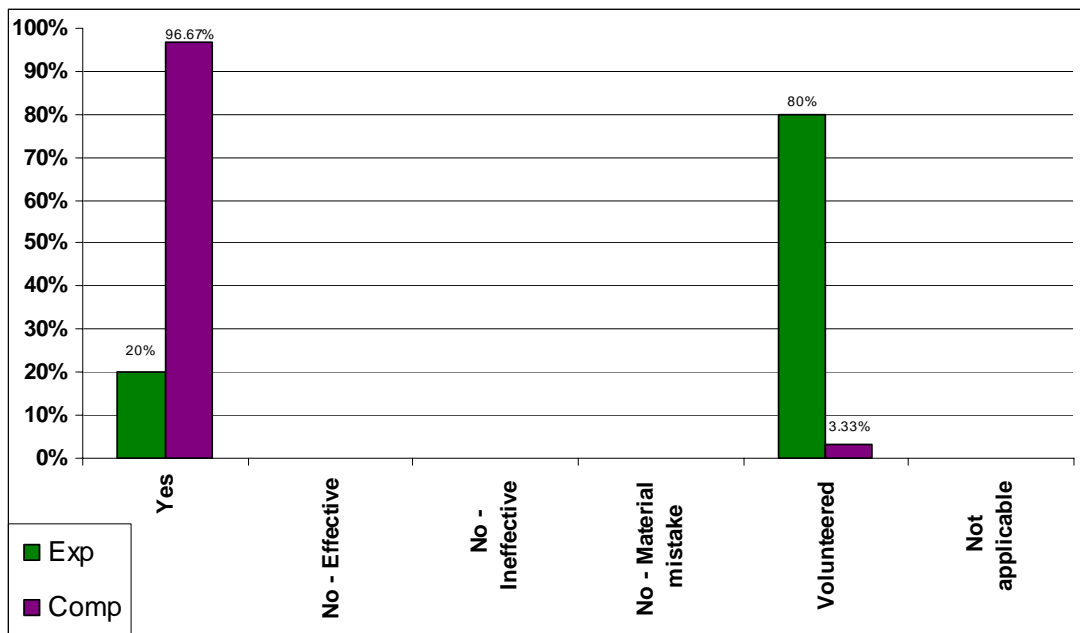
##### ***6.4.11.2 Results and discussion: Determine the identity of the perpetrator***

Figure 6.12 shows that there are differences between the comparison and the experimental group. In 20% of the cases the interviewer from the experimental group obtained the identity of the perpetrator and his/her relationship to the child correctly by using non-leading questions. However, 80% of the time the information was volunteered, bringing the total compliance of the proposed protocol by the interviewer of the experimental group to 100%.

The interviewer from the comparison group was 96.67% compliant when asking questions to determine the identity of the perpetrator. In 3.33% of the cases the identity of the alleged perpetrator was voluntarily revealed by the children, bringing compliance with the proposed protocol by the interviewer of the comparison group to 100%.

It must be noted that the focus of the research is not the initial disclosure itself, but the facilitation of it after initial disclosure. However, it appears that the play-related communication techniques used by the interviewer of the experimental group facilitated more voluntarily disclosure of the identity of the perpetrator (Fouché & Joubert, 2003:19). Nevertheless, interviewers from both the experimental and comparison groups have complied with the protocol by determining the identity of the alleged perpetrator in a legally defensible manner.

**Figure 6.12: Determine the identity of the perpetrator**



Was there then a significant difference? In order to answer this question the Mann-Whitney test was conducted. The p-value for the cluster "determine the identity of the perpetrator" equalled 0.0002 (<0.05) and therefore there is not a statistically significant difference.

#### 6.4.12 Explore explicit accounts of sexual abuse

In paragraph 4.7.2.2 the importance of exploring the child's ability to describe explicit accounts of the alleged sexual abuse has been discussed. The seven-phase forensic interview protocol proposes that the following themes be explored to determine if they are applicable to the nature of the alleged abuse revealed by the child:

- Ask the child to draw and/or list the happenings step by step (paragraph 4.6.23).
- Determine which body parts of the perpetrator, if any, were involved in the alleged sexual abuse (paragraph 4.7.2.2).
- Determine whether the child has seen any genitalia of the alleged perpetrator and let the child draw and describe it (paragraph 4.6.2.2).
- Determine which body parts of the child, if any, were involved (paragraph 4.7.2.2).
- Explore if any body movements occurred (paragraph 4.7.2.2)
- Explore any sexual behaviour mentioned (paragraph 4.7.2.2).
- Explore the naming for sexual parts (paragraph 4.7.2.2).
- Explore who has taught the child these names (paragraph 4.7.2.2).
- Explore what the child was wearing (paragraph 4.7.2.5).
- Explore what the offender was wearing (paragraph 4.7.2.5).
- Explore whether any clothing was removed (paragraph 4.7.2.5).
- Explore the offender's actions to involve the child (paragraph 4.7.2.4).
- Explore what the child physically felt (paragraph 4.7.2.2).
- Explore what the child heard, saw, smelt during the alleged incident (paragraph 4.7.2.2).
- Explore whether the offender said anything (paragraph 4.7.2.4).
- Explore whether the offender said anything about telling or not telling (paragraph 4.7.2.4).
- Assess if the child reveals a grooming process (paragraph 4.7.2.4).
- Explore the experience of initial boundary violations (paragraph 4.7.2.2).

- Ask the child if anything else happened than those incidents she revealed (paragraph 4.6.27).
- Explore any other information revealed by the child that is unclear (paragraph 4.7.2.2).

#### **6.4.12.1 Coding: Explore explicit accounts of sexual abuse**

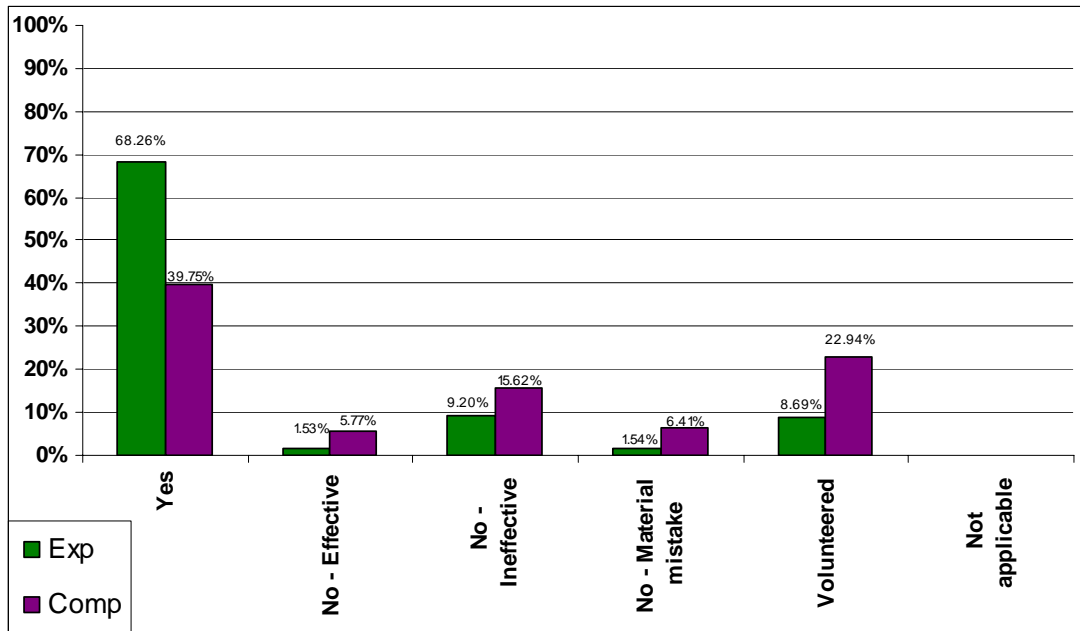
If the interviewer has correctly complied with the above-mentioned items the code "yes" was given. The category "no – effective" was coded for questioning strategies used during exploration of the explicit account which were not proposed by the seven-phase forensic interview protocol, but were still handled effectively. The code "no – ineffective" was given for specific items which were not explored, but the absence of it was not a material mistake, but rather ineffective.

If specific information concerning the cluster "explicit accounts" was volunteered by the child, "volunteered" was indicated on the checklist. If information was not relevant to the nature of the alleged sexual abuse which the child disclosed, it was indicated as "not applicable".

#### **6.4.12.2 Results and discussion: Explore explicit accounts of sexual abuse**

It is important to note that in certain interviews the interviewers had to explore different allegations and alleged incidents by different perpetrators.

**Figure 6.13: Explore explicit accounts of sexual abuse**



In figure 6.13 it is evident that the interviewer from the experimental group has explored explicit accounts of alleged sexual abuse correctly in 68.26% of the cases. However, 8.69% of the time information was volunteered, bringing the total compliance with the proposed protocol to 76.95%. Information volunteered most often by the children in the experimental group was whether the offender said anything about telling or not telling.

In 1.54% of the cases, the interviewer from the experimental group did not explore explicit accounts that were crucial to the outcome of the interview. This included whether clothing of the child (one case) or the perpetrator (one case) was removed.

Figure 6.12 shows that the interviewer from the comparison group has explored explicit accounts of alleged sexual abuse correctly in 39.75% of the cases. In 22.94% of the cases information was volunteered, bringing the total compliance of the proposed protocol to 62.69%.

In table 6.1 an illustration of the different fundamentals and scoring according to the categories are given.





**Table 6.1: Explicit accounts of sexual abuse**

Fundamentals cluster Explicit accounts		Yes – Correctly handled		No – effective		No – material mistake		No – ineffective		Volunteered		Not applicable	
		Experimental	Comparison	Experimental	Comparison	Experimental	Comparison	Experimental	Comparison	Experimental	Comparison	Experimental	Comparison
1.	Instruct child to draw/list	8	8	2	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
2.	Determine body parts of perpetrator involved	9	4	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	6	-	-
3.	Determine if child saw genitalia of perpetrator	6	3	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	3	3	3
4.	Determine which body parts of children were involved	9	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	2	-	-
5.	Explore body movements	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	7	6
6.	Explore any sexual behaviour mentioned	10	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7.	Explore naming for private parts	7	6	-	-	-	-	-	4	3	-	1	-
8.	Explore who has taught child names for private parts	2	1	-	-	-	-	8	9	-	-	-	-
9.	Explore what the child was wearing	7	4	1	-	2	5	-	-	1	1	-	-
10.	Explore what the offender was wearing	-	-	-	1	-	-	10	9	-	-	-	-
11.	Explore whether any clothing was removed	7	1	-	-	1	3	-	-	2	6	-	-
12.	Explore the offender's actions to involve the child	6	3	-	1	1	-	-	-	3	6	-	-
13.	Explore what the child physically felt	10	7	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	2	-	-
14.	Explore what the child heard, saw, smelt	3	-	-	1	-	-	7	9	-	-	-	-
15.	Explore whether offender said anything	5	1	-	1	-	-	1	3	6	5	-	-
16.	Anything said about telling/not telling	5	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	6	3	1
17.	Assess if the child reveals a grooming process	2	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	8	4
18.	Explore initial boundary violation	2	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	-
19.	Ask if anything else happened	10	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
20.	Explore any unclear info	10	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-



The items which the interviewer from the experimental group handled correctly were:

- instruct the child to draw and or list the happenings step by step;
- determine which body parts of the perpetrator were involved in the alleged sexual abuse;
- determine which body parts of the child were involved;
- explore any sexual behaviour mentioned;
- explore the naming of body parts;
- explore what the child was wearing;
- explore whether any clothing was removed; and
- explore what the child physically felt.

Fundamentals handled correctly in the comparison group included:

- determine which body parts of the perpetrator were involved in the alleged sexual abuse;
- determine body parts of the perpetrator involved;
- determine if child saw genitalia of perpetrator;
- determine which body parts of children were involved;
- explore any body movements;
- explore any sexual behaviour mentioned;
- explore naming for private parts;
- explore who has taught the child names for private parts;
- explore what the child was wearing;
- explore whether any clothing was removed;
- explore the offenders actions to involved the child;
- explore what the child physical felt;
- explore whether offender said anything;
- explore whether anything was said about telling or not telling;
- assess if the child revealed a grooming process;
- explore initial boundary violation;
- explore whether anything else happened; and
- explore any unclear information.

The Mann-Whitney test was conducted and the p-value for this cluster equalled 0.0005 (<0.05) and therefore there is a statistically significant difference between the comparison and experimental groups.

#### **6.4.13 Determine context explanation**

It is important to ask clarifying questions on any information regarding the context that is not clear or that is missing (paragraph 4.7.2.7). The seven-phase forensic interview protocol proposes that the following fundamentals need to be taken into consideration and covered during exploration of context information:

- The address where the alleged abuse happened (paragraph 4.7.2.7).
- The identity of the person(s) living there (paragraph 4.7.2.7).
- Whose place/home it is (paragraph 4.7.2.7).
- Where in the venue the alleged abuse took place (paragraph 4.7.2.7).
- Exploration of furniture and objects present (paragraph 4.7.2.7).
- Where other people were at the time of the abuse (paragraph 4.7.2.7).
- If there is a possibility for any persons who could have seen what has happened (paragraph 4.7.2.7).
- How the child got to and out of the venue (paragraph 4.7.2.7).
- Where he/she went afterwards (paragraph 4.7.2.7).
- Exploration on when the alleged abuse happened and attempting to link time to other happenings (paragraph 4.7.2.3).
- Explore the child's reactions after the alleged abuse (paragraph 4.7.2.6).
- How the child got to be alone with the alleged perpetrator (paragraph 4.7.2.7).
- What the alleged perpetrator said to obtain the child's involvement (paragraph 4.7.2.4).
- Explore where the perpetrator went after the alleged abuse and his reactions towards the child afterwards (paragraph 4.7.2.9).
- Explore whether the child has told anyone and what this person's reaction was (paragraph 4.7.2.10).

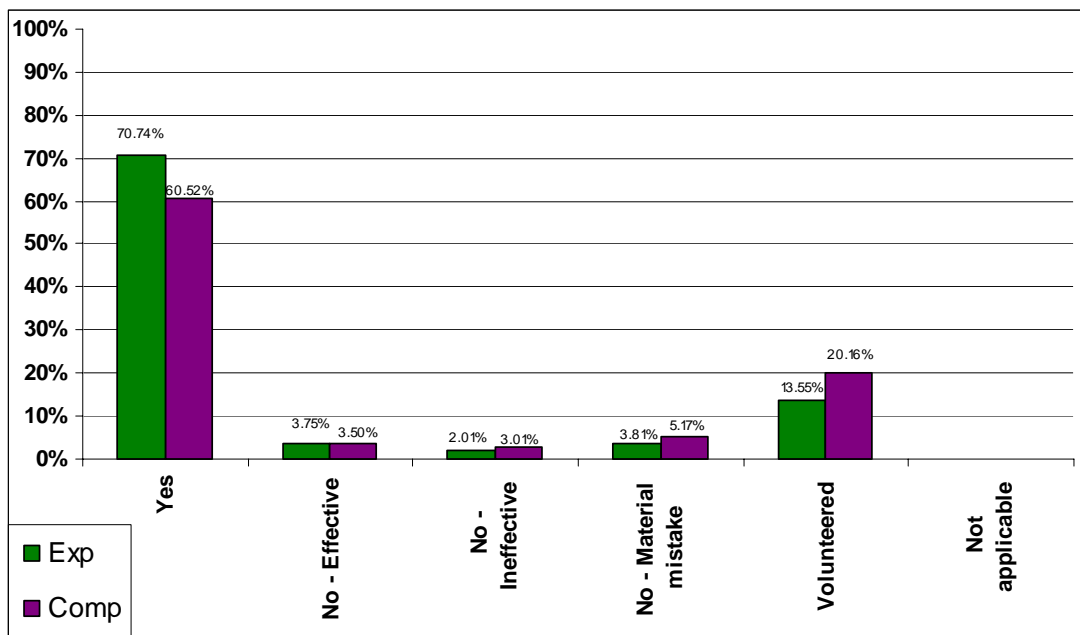
- Explore whether the alleged abuse happened anywhere else (paragraph 4.6.2.7).
- Follow-up of any other context information that is unclear (paragraph 4.7.2.7).

**6.4.13.1 Coding: Determine context explanation**

For the purposes of coding all the above-mentioned fundamentals are regarded as crucial in order for the interviewer to conclude at the end of an investigation. These are also typical questions to be asked to the child witness during testimony. When coding, if the interviewer did cover these themes, it was coded either "no – material mistake" or " no – ineffective", depending on the type of sexual abuse revealed by the child. The code "no – effective" was indicated where a child for example indicated that the abuse happened outside, therefore context questions relating to furniture and venue would be rated "not applicable".

**6.4.13.2 Results and discussion: Determine context explanation**

**Figure 6.14: Determine context explanation**



The interviewer from the comparison group complied in 60.52% of the cases with what is expected in the proposed forensic interview protocol. In 20.16% of the cases information was volunteered, bringing the total compliance with the proposed protocol to 80.68%. The interviewer from the experimental group complied correctly in 70.74% of the cases and information was volunteered in 13.55% of the time bringing the total compliance to 84.29%.

Fundamentals not handled correctly, but still effectively was 3.50% for the comparison group and 3.75% for the experimental group. Fundamentals not handled which resulted in a specific part of the interview being ineffective were 3.01% for the comparison group and 2.01% for the experimental group. In 5.17% of the cases the interviewer from the comparison group handled fundamentals in a way which is according to the proposed protocol a material mistake compared to 3.81% in the experimental group. Refer to table 6.2 for breakdown of figures.

**Table 6.2: Context information**

Fundamentals cluster Context information		Yes – Correctly handled		No – effective		No – material mistake		No – ineffective		Volunteered		Not applicable	
		Experimental	Comparison	Experimental	Comparison	Experimental	Comparison	Experimental	Comparison	Experimental	Comparison	Experimental	Comparison
1.	Where the alleged abuse happened	8	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-
2.	Address or who's living there	8	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	-	-
3.	Where in the house/car/venue the alleged abuse happened	9	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	-	-
4.	How the child got to that venue	7	4	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	5	-	-
5.	Furniture/objects in venue	6	2	-	-	-	4	-	-	5	3	-	-
6.	Where other people were at the time	10	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-
7.	How the child got to be alone with the perpetrator	5	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	7	-	-
8.	What the alleged perpetrator said to obtain child's	4	5	-	-	1	-	-	-	5	5	-	-



Fundamentals cluster Context information		Yes – Correctly handled		No – effective		No – material mistake		No – ineffective		Volunteered		Not applicable	
		Experimental	Comparison	Experimental	Comparison	Experimental	Comparison	Experimental	Comparison	Experimental	Comparison	Experimental	Comparison
	involvement												
9.	Whether any threat were posed	1	2	1	-	-	-	1	-	4	6	3	2
10.	How child got to out of the venue	8	5	-	-	1	2	-	-	3	3	-	-
11.	When the alleged abuse happened	10	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
12.	Attempt to link it to other happenings	9	9	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	1	-	-
13.	Child's reactions after the alleged abuse	5	3	2	1	-	-	2	3	-	1	1	2
14.	Where the perpetrator went after abuse	5	1	3	5	-	-	-	1	3	1	1	2
15.	Perpetrator's reactions afterwards	3	3	4	2	-	-	3	2	-	2	1	1
16.	Possibility of any eyewitnesses	9	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	1	1
17.	Whether the child has told anyone and their reactions	8	8	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	1	-	-
18.	Reasons for not telling immediately	3	5	-	-	7	2	-	-	-	1	-	2
19.	Whether the abuse happened anywhere else	10	8	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	-
20.	If any pornographic material was used	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	6
21.	Explore/follow-up context information that is unclear	10	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

It suggests that social workers in the field may well be aware of the obligation they have to clarify contextual information. It is, however, again evident that if a social worker would be aware of the specific contextual information, it should assist him/her to explore more thoroughly.

The Mann-Whitney test was conducted and the p-value for cluster "determine context information" was 0.0172 (<0.05), and therefore there is a statistically significant difference between the comparison and experimental groups.

#### **6.4.14 Emotional content**

Although abused children do not necessarily display extreme emotional reactions when revealing alleged incidents (paragraph 4.7.2.6), professionals do assess emotional content. Aspects to be explored and evaluated are: the child's emotional reactions during and after the sexual abuse; thoughts of the child during the abuse; exploration and responding towards the child's emotional reactions during disclosure.

##### **6.4.14.1 Coding: Emotional content**

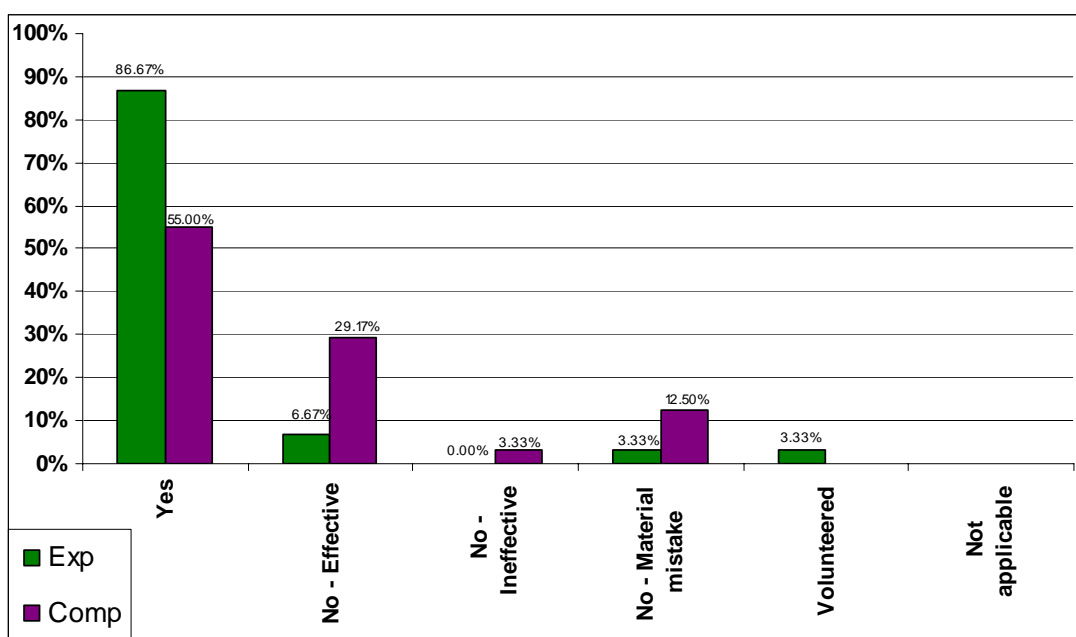
If a fundamental like exploring of the thoughts is not done, it would be regarded as effective or ineffective depending on the nature of the alleged abuse, as children in the middle childhood struggle with this abstract concept. If the interviewer has not explored and responded on the child's emotional reactions during the disclosure, it would be regarded as "no – material mistake". When the child voluntarily gave information which could be regarded as emotional content, it was coded "volunteered".

##### **6.4.14.2 Results and discussion: Emotional content**

A difference of 31.67% occurred (figure 6.15) between comparison and experimental group on the code "yes". In the experimental group the interviewer did comply with the proposed protocol in 86.67% of the cases, and information was volunteered in 3.33%, bringing the total compliance with the proposed protocol to 90%. In 55% of the cases the interviewer of the comparison group complied with what is expected. The interviewer from the experimental group had 6.67% on "no – ineffective", 0% on "no – effective", and 3.3% "no – material mistake", compared to the 29.17%, 3.33% and 12.50% respectively of the interviewer from the comparison group.

It may well be suggested that in practice social workers do not necessarily explore and focus on the emotional reactions. The reason for this may be that they focus so much on getting the facts in order to report, or maybe fearing a first rapport statement, that they steer away from the importance of exploring the emotional content. The fact that the interviewer conducting the experimental group was aware of the importance of this aspect caused her to explore more emotional content.

**Figure 6.15: Emotional content**



The Mann-Whitney test was conducted and the p-value for cluster "emotional content" equalled 0.0068 (<0.05), and therefore there is a statistically significant difference between the comparison and experimental groups.

#### 6.4.15 Explore the existence of internalisations

As part of the evaluation, the interviewer would attempt to determine whether the child discloses any internalisations (paragraph 2.11.5). However, it must not be explored by means of leading questions or suggestions (paragraph 4.7.2.6).



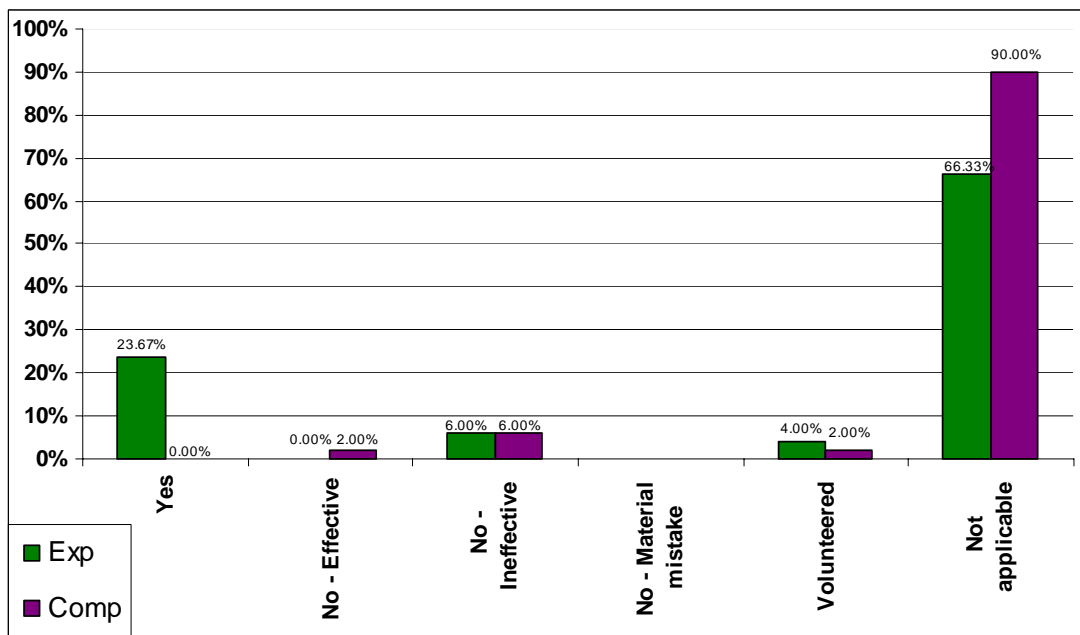
Existence of internalisations is mostly determined by follow-up questions after a child initially disclosed something relating to it. An attempt was made to determine the existence of the following internalisations: stigmatisation, powerlessness; betrayal, traumatic sexualisations, and whether anything changed in the child's life since the abuse happened.

**6.4.15.1 Coding: Explore the existence of internalisations**

If the child gave the interviewer a cue and she could use non-leading questions to explore further, "yes" was marked. Due to the fact that it is extremely difficult to determine it without being leading, the category "not applicable" was marked if no cue from the child was forthcoming. If the child has offered information and the interviewer did not follow it up, it was coded "no – ineffective" or "no – effective", depending on the type of questions asked.

**6.4.15.2 Results and discussion: Explore the existence of internalisations**

**Figure 6.16: Internalisations**



From figure 6.16 it is evident that both the interviewers from the experimental and comparison groups found it difficult to explore in a non-leading way whether the child has internalised negative messages as a result of the abuse. The interviewer from the comparison group did not manage to explore any internalisations, compared to the experimental group's (23.67%). It is difficult to determine whether the child has internalised negative messages as result of the abuse. However, if the child volunteers information regarding this, the interviewer must be ready to explore in a non-leading way.

The Mann-Whitney test was conducted and the p-value for this cluster was 0.0129 (<0.05). Therefore there is a statistically significant difference between the comparison and experimental groups.

#### **6.4.16 Investigate multiple hypotheses**

It is imperative that forensic interviewers must explore multiple hypotheses in order to establish if the child could have gotten the information somewhere else or from someone else (paragraph 4.6.26). When exploring multiple hypotheses the following should be explored:

- If any other person has also sexually abused the child (4.6.26).
- If the child has seen similar sexual acts anywhere else (4.6.26).
- Exposure to explicit television programmes (4.6.26).
- If the child knows any person who has also been a victim of sexual abuse and clarify if the details are not identical (4.6.26).
- When the child heard for the first time that sexual abuse exists and explore the circumstances around that (4.6.26).
- Who taught the child about prevention (4.6.26).
- What parents and or caregivers said about the alleged abuse (4.6.26).

#### **6.4.16.1 Coding: Investigate multiple hypotheses**

If the interviewer did not comply it would either be coded "no – material mistake", "no – ineffective" or "no – effective". Fundamentals to be coded as definitely "no – material mistake" are:

- If any person also sexually abused the child.
- If the child has seen similar sexual acts anywhere else.
- Exposure to explicit television programmes.
- If the child knows any other person who was also sexually abused.
- When the child heard that sexual abuse exist.
- What other caregivers say about the alleged abuse.

The fundamental "who taught the child about prevention" was coded "no – ineffective" if it was not explored. If the child disclosed information on this fundamental during any of the other questions, then the code of "no – ineffective" was given. Information volunteered was coded accordingly.

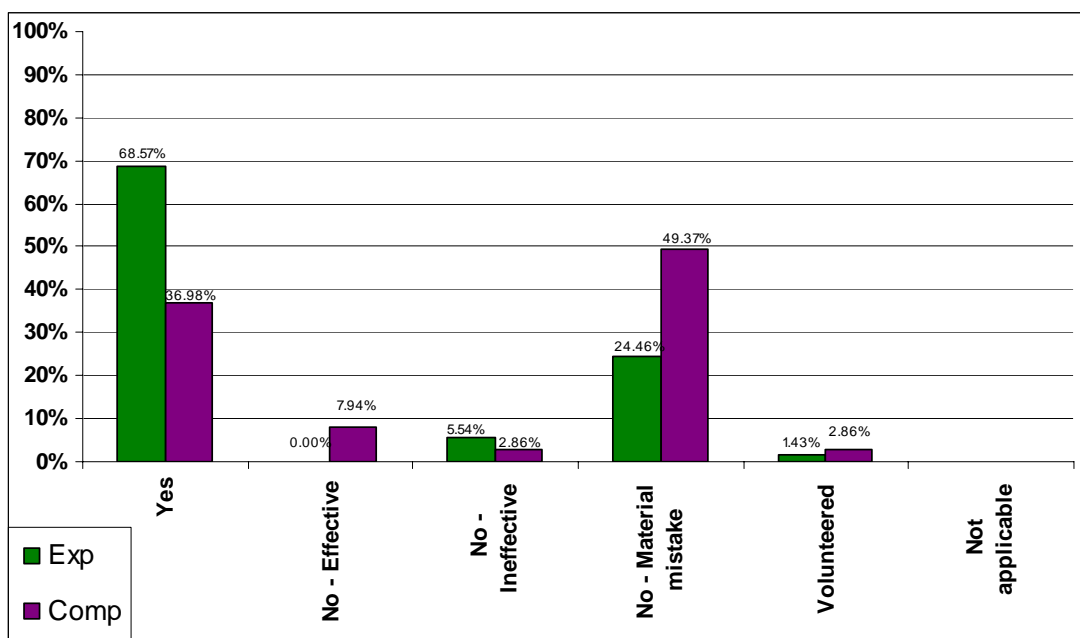
#### **6.4.16.2 Results and discussion: Investigate multiple hypotheses**

Figure 6.17 indicates that the interviewer from the experimental group explored multiple hypotheses in 68.57% of the cases, and 1.43% of the information was offered voluntarily, bringing the total compliance with the proposed protocol to 70%. In 5.54% of the cases items were not explored, and the absence of it made that part of the interview ineffective. In 24.46% of the cases fundamentals which are crucial to the outcome of the case were not explored.

The interviewer of the comparison group complied 36.98% with what is expected. In 2.85% of the cases information was volunteered by the children, bringing the total compliance to 39.84%.

It is thus evident that although the researcher was aware of which hypotheses she was supposed to investigate, she did not consistently do so. It is, however, evident that in the comparison group which represents general social work practice, it was done almost 20% less than the experimental group. This may indicate that the interviewer's awareness of these fundamentals in the experimental group made her explore more hypotheses than a person who is not aware of these fundamentals which are crucial in a legally defensible forensic interview protocol.

**Figure 6.17: Investigate multiple hypotheses**



The Mann-Whitney test was conducted and the p-value for the cluster "investigate multiple hypotheses", equalled 0.052 (<0.05), and therefore there is a statistically significant difference between the comparison and experimental groups.

#### 6.4.17 The use of anatomical dolls

As discussed in paragraph 4.6.24, anatomical dolls are only used to clarify information from the child after it has already been verbalised by the child. The seven-phase forensic interview protocol proposes that anatomical dolls be used in

a non-leading way; only to clarify information. The interviewer should not indicate to the child which people are represented by the dolls.

#### **6.4.17.1 Coding: The use of anatomical dolls**

Only two categories were applicable here. If the interviewer did not comply with the above it was regarded as "no – material mistake". "Not applicable" was marked when the interviewer did not make use of the anatomical dolls.

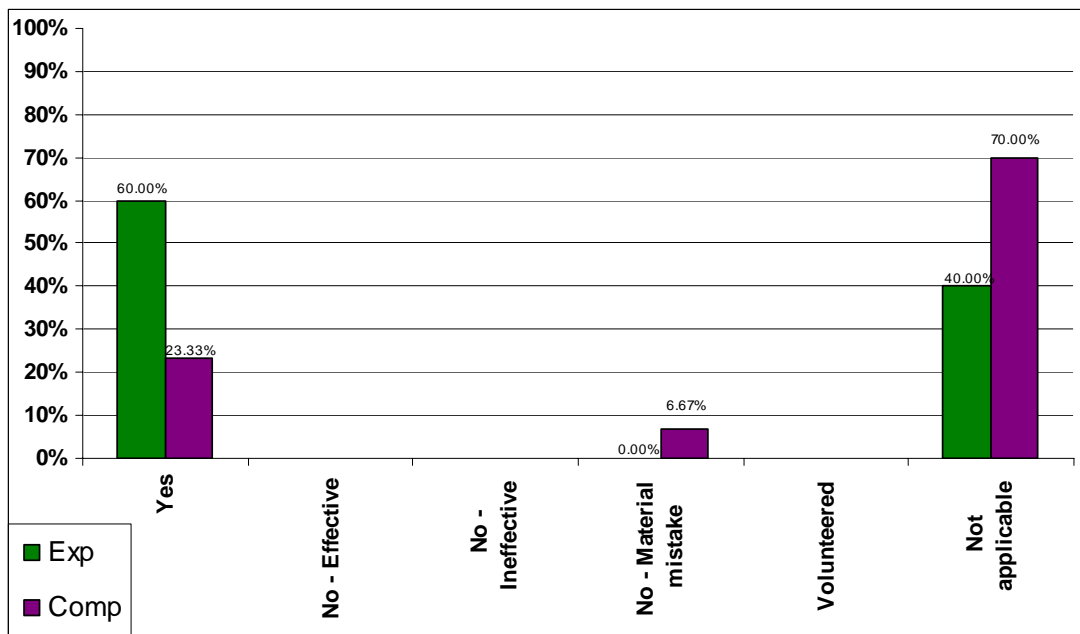
#### **6.4.17.2 Results and discussion: The use of anatomical dolls**

The interviewer from the experimental group used anatomical dolls correctly in 60% of the cases, and the comparison group 23%. The interviewer from the comparison group used the anatomical dolls in a way which was considered to be a material mistake in 6.67% of the cases. The interviewer from the comparison did not use the anatomical dolls in 70% of the cases, compared to 40% in the experimental group.

It is thus evident that the proposed interview protocol focuses on the use of anatomical dolls in a more legally defensible way and that the interviewer of the experimental group's increased awareness contributed to her following legally defensible guidelines. The use of anatomical dolls as proposed by the seven-phase forensic interview protocol is thus an important contribution to the profession.

The Mann-Whitney test was conducted and the p-value for this cluster was 0.0744 ( $>0.05$ ). Although it is not a significant difference, there is however a tendency which indicates that the interviewer in the experimental group used anatomical dolls more effectively than the interviewer from the comparison group.

**Figure 6.18: The use of anatomical dolls**



#### 6.4.18 Test for consistency

Test for consistency is when the interviewer evaluates the child's story and ask clarifying questions during the interview in order to test the child's account for consistency (paragraph 4.7.2.11).

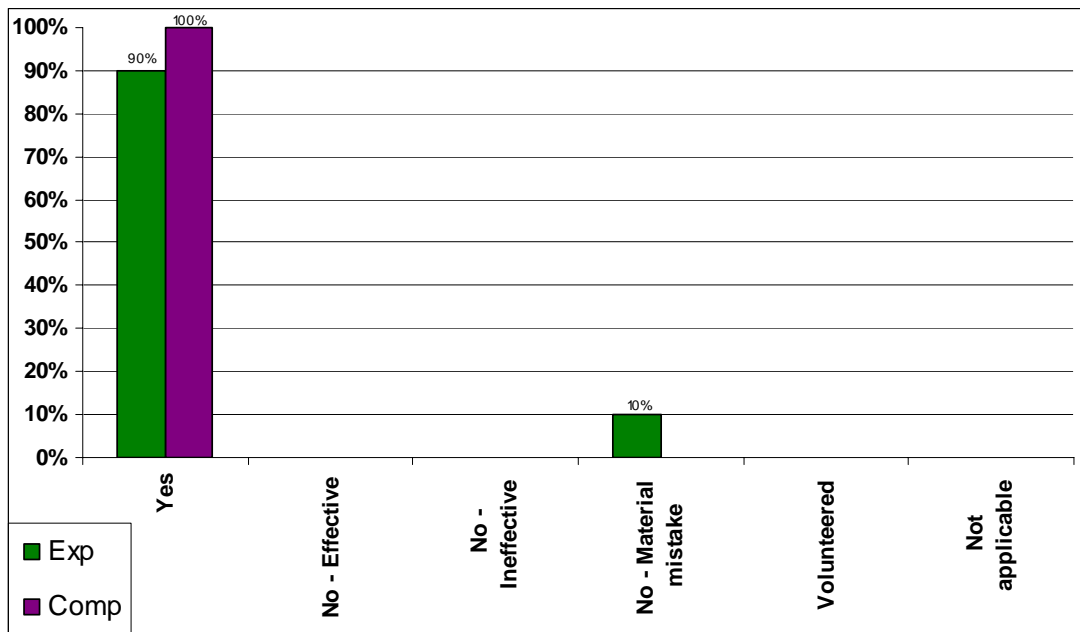
##### 6.4.18.1 Coding: Test for consistency

Consistency is extremely important when a social worker works in the context of forensic assessments. If it was not done correctly and thoroughly, it was regarded as "no – material mistake". Correct handling of this would consist of following up on all leads and exploring any uncertainties.

### 6.4.18.2 Results and discussion: Test for consistency

The interviewer from the comparison group complied 100% with this fundamental, compared to the interviewer from the experimental group who only achieved 90% consistency. It may well mean that social workers in practice attempt to make 100% sure that they understand the child. In the one case where the interviewer from the experimental group did not comply, the child had psychological difficulties and the interview had to be terminated due to the fact that the interviewer determined that the child was lying about the allegation.

Figure 6.19: Test for consistency



Was there a statistically significant difference between the comparison and experimental groups? The Mann-Whitney test was conducted and the p-value for cluster "test for consistency" equalled 0.3173 ( $>0.05$ ) and therefore there is not a statistically significant difference between the comparison and experimental groups.

#### **6.4.19 Interviewer's conduct**

In paragraph 4.4.2 the importance of the interviewer's conduct was described. It was emphasised that acceptance must be displayed at all times, even if the child is telling a lie. The interviewer should be accepting of the child at all times, give reassurance in a non-leading way, avoid suggestive utterances and verbalisations (Warren *et al.*, 1999:129) and display appropriate listening and responding skills (paragraph 4.4.2).

##### **6.4.19.1 Coding: Interviewer's conduct**

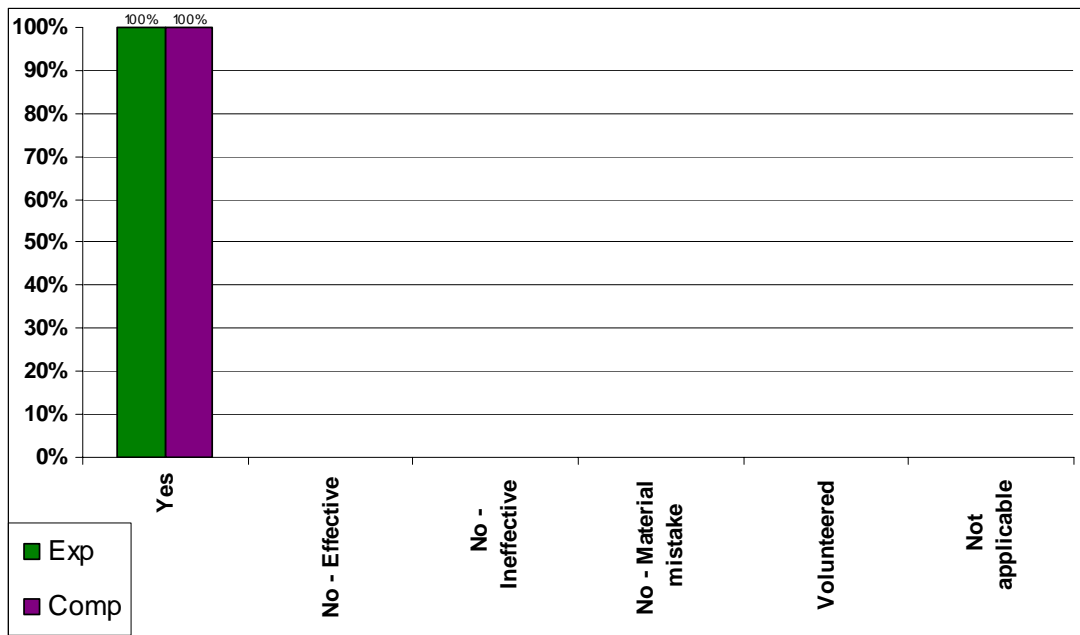
If the interviewer complied appropriately as prescribed by the seven-phase forensic interview protocol a coding of "yes" was given. If the interviewer did not comply with any of the items above, it was indicated as "no – material mistake".

##### **6.4.19.2 Results and discussion: Interviewer's conduct**

Figure 6.19 shows that professionals from both the comparison and experimental groups have in all their interviews (100%) complied with what is expected from them in this regard. This may well be confirmation that both social workers have mastered the necessary skills to ensure that their conduct do not have a major impact on the child and the outcome of the interview. There is thus no difference between the experimental and comparison groups.



Figure 6.20: Interviewer's conduct



#### 6.4.20 Practical arrangements

In the cluster "practical arrangements" fundamentals included in the forensic interview as proposed by the seven-phase forensic interview protocol are:

- avoid giving the child a treat (paragraph 4.4.3);
- avoid allowing the parent to be present during the interview (paragraph 4.5.2); and
- allow children breaks as often as possible.

##### 6.4.20.1 Coding: Practical arrangements

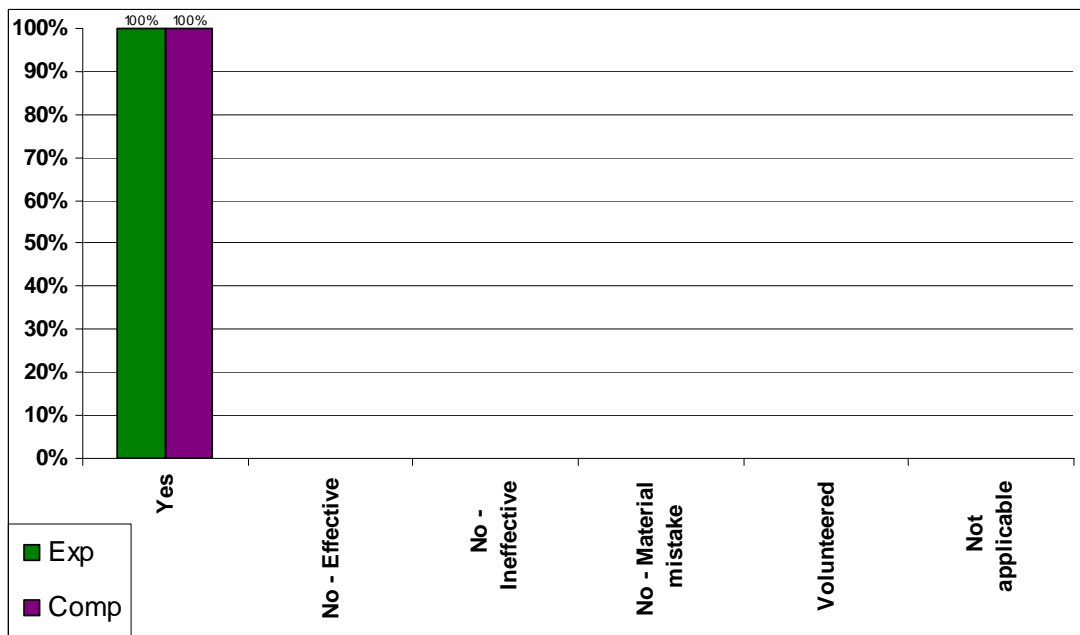
Compliance to the above was coded with "yes". If the interviewer did not comply with the first two fundamentals in this cluster as proposed by the seven-phase forensic interview protocol, it was regarded as "no – material mistake" as it may have a detrimental impact on the outcome of the interview. If the children were not

often allowed breaks as proposed, it was coded "no – ineffective" as it will not necessarily have a detrimental impact on the outcome of the interview.

#### 6.4.20.2 Results and discussion: Practical arrangements

It is evident from figure 6.20 that professionals from both the experimental and comparison groups complied with all three fundamentals in this cluster. In all ten cases the interviewers of the experimental group and comparison group respectively complied 100% as proposed by the newly developed seven-phase forensic interview protocol.

**Figure 6.21: Practical arrangements**



There is no difference between the experimental and comparison groups. It is noticeable that social workers in practice may well be aware of the dangers of giving a child a treat during an interview and also allowing parents to be present. These results suggest that social workers in practice are aware that children should be allowed breaks during the interview. It is thus imperative that these fundamentals be parts of all social workers' protocol.



#### **6.4.21 Global check**

Within this cluster an overall evaluation takes place regarding the following fundamentals:

- Whether the interviewer stays in the child's frame of reference (paragraph 3.8.1.1).
- The interviewer avoids taking the child's comprehension of language and questions for granted (paragraph 3.8.1.1).
- The interviewer avoids reflecting empathy verbally, and avoids doing therapy (paragraph 4.4.4).

##### **6.4.21.1 Coding: Global check**

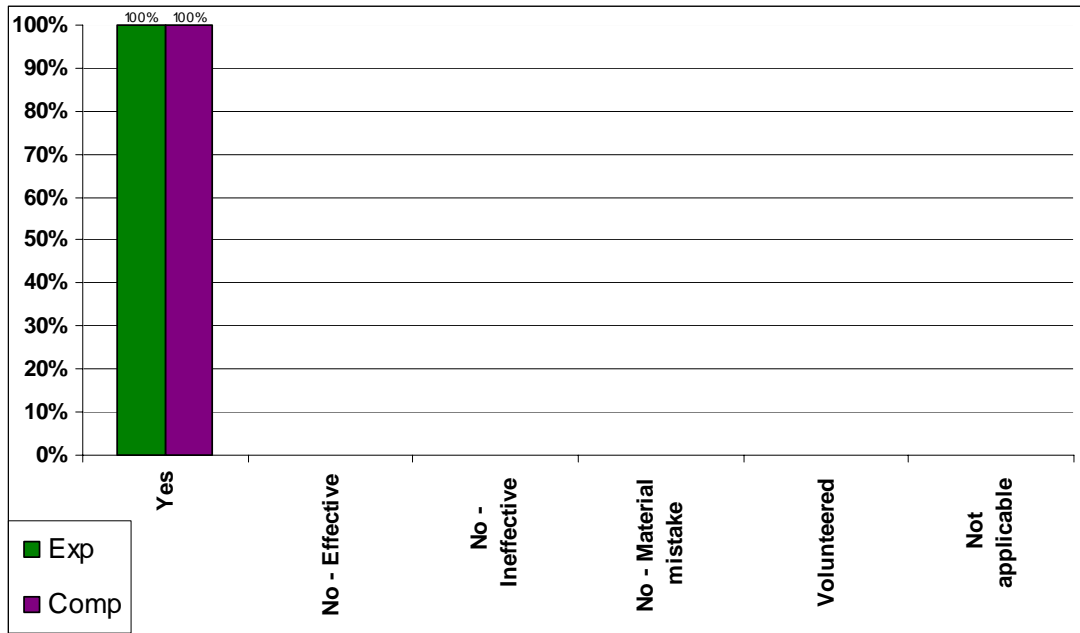
Compliance to the above items was coded "yes" on the checklist. If the interviewer did not comply with the first two mentioned fundamentals it was coded as "no – ineffective". Although it is not best practice, it does not necessarily have a detrimental impact on the outcome of the interview. If the interviewer did not avoid reflecting empathy verbally or doing therapy, as proposed by the seven-phase forensic interview protocol, it was coded "no – material mistake" as reflecting empathy may implant feelings on the child which do not necessarily exist. Therapy during the forensic interview could also have a detrimental impact on the outcome.

##### **6.4.21.2 Results and discussion: Global check**

As illustrated in figure 6.21, both the professionals from the comparison and experimental groups adhered in all their cases (100%) to what is proposed by the seven-phase forensic interview protocol. This indicates that both interviewers are aware that when working with children, they have to stay in the child's frame of reference, consider the child's comprehension of language, and avoid reflecting

empathy verbally and doing therapy in the context of a forensic interview. There is thus no difference between the experimental and comparison groups.

**Figure 6.22: Global check**



#### 6.4.22 Closure of interview

As discussed in chapter four (4.7.2.1.2), the interviewer has to ensure that the following fundamentals are complied with during the last phase of the forensic interview (paragraph 4.7.2.12), namely:

- The child leaves the office contained. Although it will not have a detrimental impact on the outcome of the interview, it is an ethical concern when a child leaves an office uncontained.
- The interviewer must ensure the child's personal safety as far as possible within his/her ability.
- Use discretion regarding the explanation of the legal process.

#### **6.4.22.1 Coding: Closure of interview**

As proposed by the seven-phase forensic interview protocol, if the interviewer did not comply with the first two fundamentals, it would be regarded as "no – material mistake". Although it will not necessarily have a detrimental impact on the outcome of the interview, these are ethical considerations laid down by the Prevention of Family Violence Act, 1993 (Act No. 133 of 1993), Sexual offences Amended Act, 2007 (Act no. 35 of 2007), as well as the Child Care Act, 1983 (Act No. 74 of 1983). Explanation regarding the legal process must be addressed with the child according to his/her developmental stage and the unique circumstances of the child. If the interviewer has not done so, it was regarded as "no – ineffective". If a legal case has not been filed or no legal actions were involved, this fundamental was coded "not applicable".

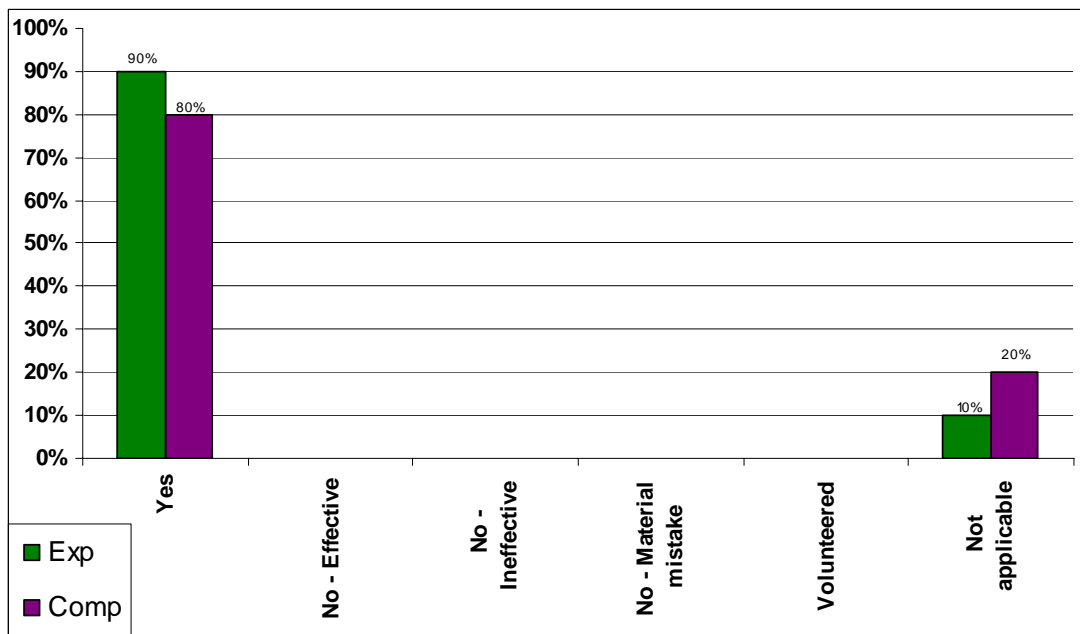
#### **6.4.22.2 Results and discussion: Closure of interview**

As seen in figure 6.22, a difference occurred between the comparison and experimental groups. In the experimental group the interviewer has complied correctly in nine (90%) of the cases and in one (10%) of the cases it was regarded as "not applicable" as the interviewer was unsure whether the case would be referred to a criminal court for prosecution.

In the comparison group it was handled correctly in eight (80%) of the cases and in two (20%) it was found "not applicable", as in both cases the interviewer was unsure whether the cases would indeed be referred to a criminal court for investigation.

The results suggest thus that in practice social workers do ensure that children leave the interview room contained, and that most of the times they do address issues regarding the legal process if applicable to the specific circumstances of the case. The proposed seven-phase forensic interview protocol is not only accurate in including these fundamentals, but it also appears that it can be implemented in practice.

**Figure 6.23: Closure of interview**



After the Mann-Whitney test was conducted, the p-value for cluster "closure of interviews" equalled 0.4560 ( $>0.05$ ) and therefore it is not a statistically significant difference between the comparison and experimental groups.

## 6.5 DATA ANALYSIS: PHASES

The seven-phase forensic interview protocol consists of 23 clusters (one cluster: "follow up on non-verbal behaviour" was excluded) and 119 fundamentals (three fundamentals as already mentioned were excluded) fundamentals. The seven phases, represented with specific fundamentals were categorised, after which the Department of Statistics of the University of Pretoria analysed the data from the completed checklists. A comparison was made between the experimental and the comparison groups.

The seven phases are:

- Phase one: Rapport-building and initial disclosure
- Phase two: Ground rules

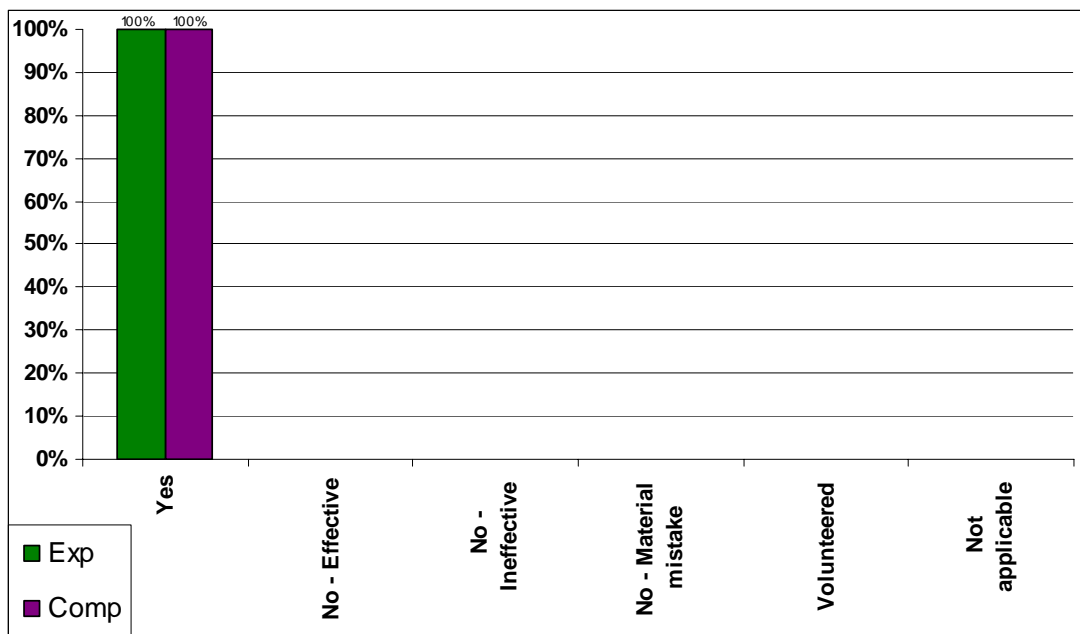
- Phase three: Truth-and-lie and morality check
- Phase four: Inviting free narrative
- Phase five: Questioning format
- Phase six: Explore multiple hypotheses
- Phase seven: Closure

The statistical analysis for the comparison between the experimental and comparison groups will now be discussed.

### 6.5.1 Phase one: Rapport-building and initial disclosure

Phase one (paragraph 5.4.1) consists of making contact with the child, facilitating the initial disclosure by means of non-leading play-related communication techniques (not part of this research), and clarifying the label or description the child has given as sexual abuse.

**Figure 6.24: Phase one: Rapport-building and initial disclosure**



From figure 6.23 it appears that the proposed seven-phase forensic interview protocol may well not be different or new to the social work profession in South

Africa as both the interviewers from the comparison and experimental groups have complied 100% in their ten cases each. There is thus no statistical difference between the comparison and experimental groups.

This phase as proposed seems to be already used in practice by social workers specialising in the assessment of allegedly sexually abused children. However, the researcher is not sure whether less experienced social workers would be able to conduct the first phase successfully.

### **6.5.2 Phase two: Ground rules**

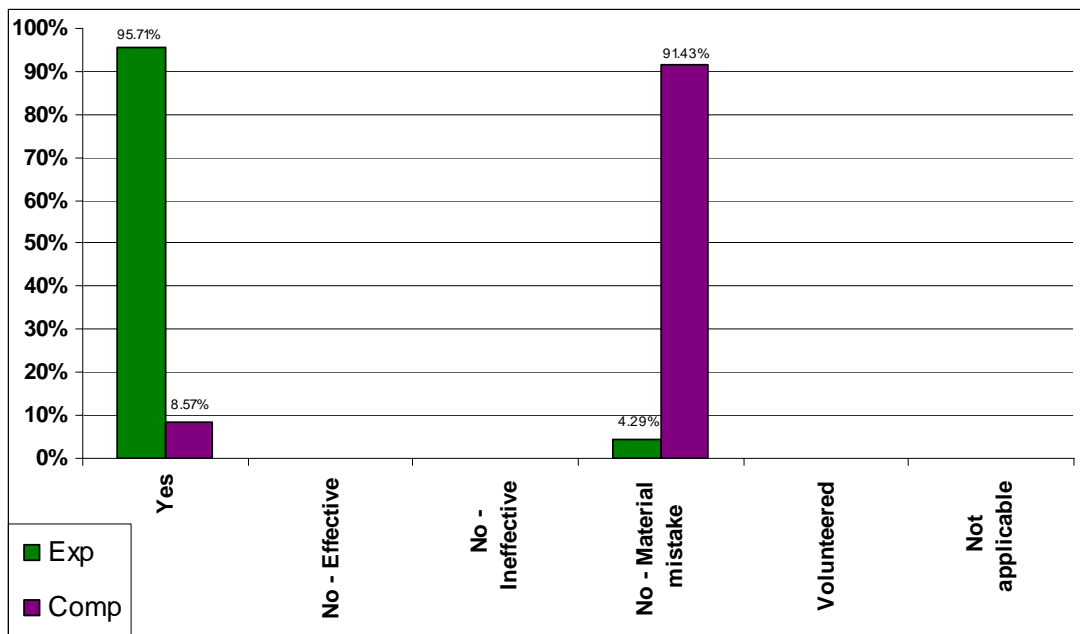
The ground rules were discussed in paragraph 4.6.7 and form phase two of the seven-phase forensic interview protocol (paragraph 5.4.2). It comprises the following:

- Emphasising the importance to tell everything.
- Informing the child that he/she may indicate when he/she does not know the answer, does not understand the question, cannot remember what happened, or does not want to answer.
- Informing the child to correct the interviewer if the wrong information is reflected.
- Testing the child's comprehension with neutral topics.
- Empowering the child to ask questions.

From figure 6.24 it is apparent that in 8.57% of the cases the interviewer from the comparison group laid down ground rules, compared to the 95.71% of the interviewer of the experimental group. The results thus suggest that it is possible to implement the ground rules before the start of abuse-focused questioning. It also appears that although professionals know what the correct protocol is, they sometimes fail to do so due to several factors like circumstances, the child's process or human error. It is noted from figure 6.24 that ground rules are as a rule not discussed in practice.



**Figure 6.25: Phase two: Ground rules**



The Mann-Whitney test was conducted and the p-value for phase two was 0.0001 (<0.05), and therefore there is a statistically significant difference between the comparison and experimental groups. This phase may be regarded as a possible contribution to the social work profession in the context of forensic assessment interviews and should be explored through further research.

### 6.5.3 Phase three: Truth-and-lie and morality check

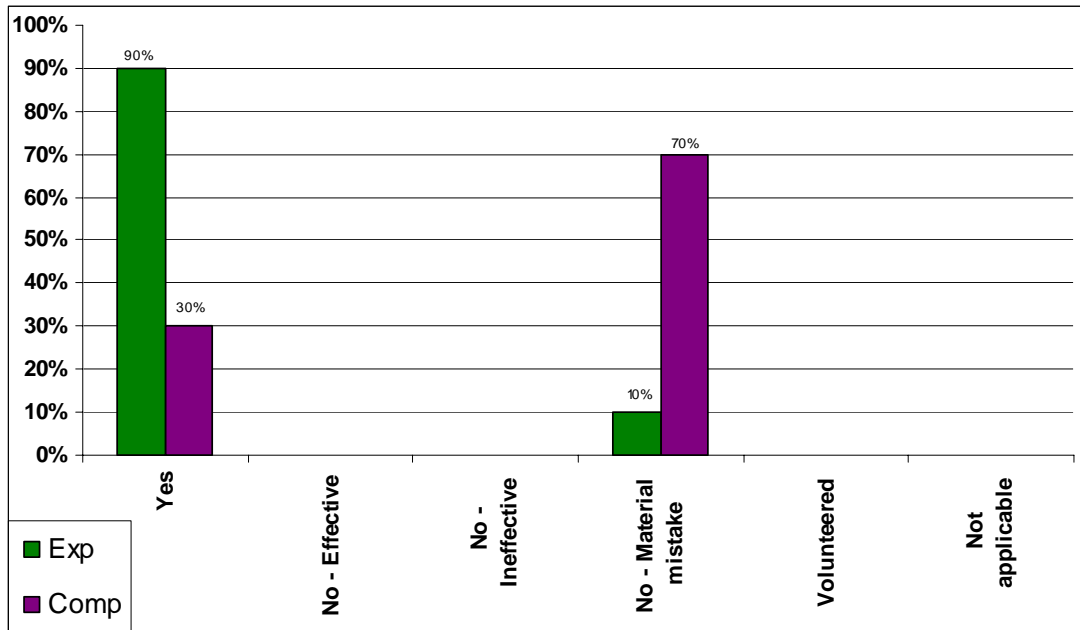
In phase three the truth-and-lie check, as well as the morality check is done (paragraph 5.5.3).

Figure 6.25 shows that the interviewer from the comparison group only conducted, truth-and-lie and morality checks in three cases (30%), compared to the interviewer of the experimental group who complied in nine cases (90%).

Due to the small sample used in this study no generalisations are made, but only suggestions. It thus suggests that it is possible to implement this phase of the proposed protocol and that the increased awareness to do so caused the

interviewer of the experimental group to comply with the proposed forensic interview protocol in nine of the ten cases (90%).

**Figure 6.26: Phase three: Truth-and-lie and morality check**



Was there a statistical significant difference between the comparison and experimental groups? The Mann-Whitney test was conducted and the p-value for phase three equalled 0.0001 ( $<0.05$ ). Therefore there is a statistically significant difference between the comparison and experimental groups.

From figure 6.25 it is suggested that a truth-and-lie and morality check as discussed under paragraph 4.6.25 is not optimally used in practice and that this may possibly be a contribution to the field of social work.

#### 6.5.4 Phase 4: Inviting free narrative

Phase four as discussed in paragraph 5.4.4, consists of:

- whether free narrative is invited;
- determining whether the alleged abuse happened once or more than once;
- labelling different blank pages;

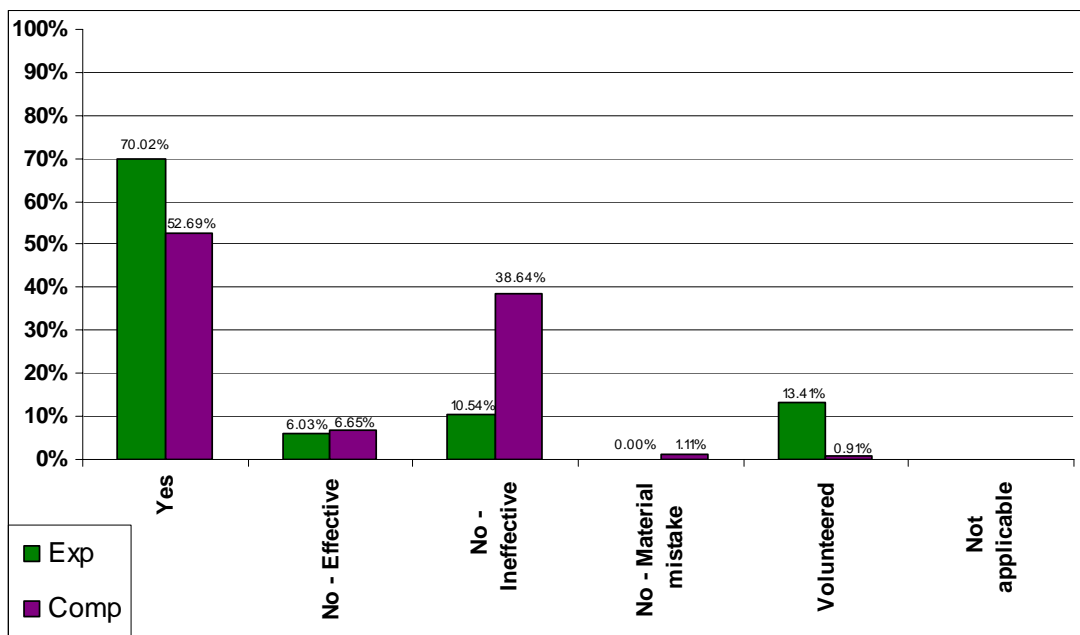
- asking the child to close his/her eyes and think back to the incident;
- asking the child to draw pictures, and
- the interviewer taking one picture at a time and invites free narrative.

From the free narrative the interviewer identifies preliminary themes to explore.

Figure 6.26 illustrates that the interviewer from the experimental group complied in 70.02% of the cases with the fourth phase of the proposed protocol. Children volunteered information in 13.41% of the cases, bringing the total compliance of the experimental group to 83.43%.

In 52.69% of the cases, the interviewer from the comparison group complied with the proposed interview protocol, and in 0.91% of the cases information was volunteered, bringing the compliance of the comparison group to 53.60%.

**Figure 6.27: Phase four: Inviting free narratives**



The statistics revealed interesting trends suggesting that social workers in practice indeed allow free narrative as proposed by the seven-phase forensic interview protocol (comparison group complied 52.69%, compared to the 70.02% of the

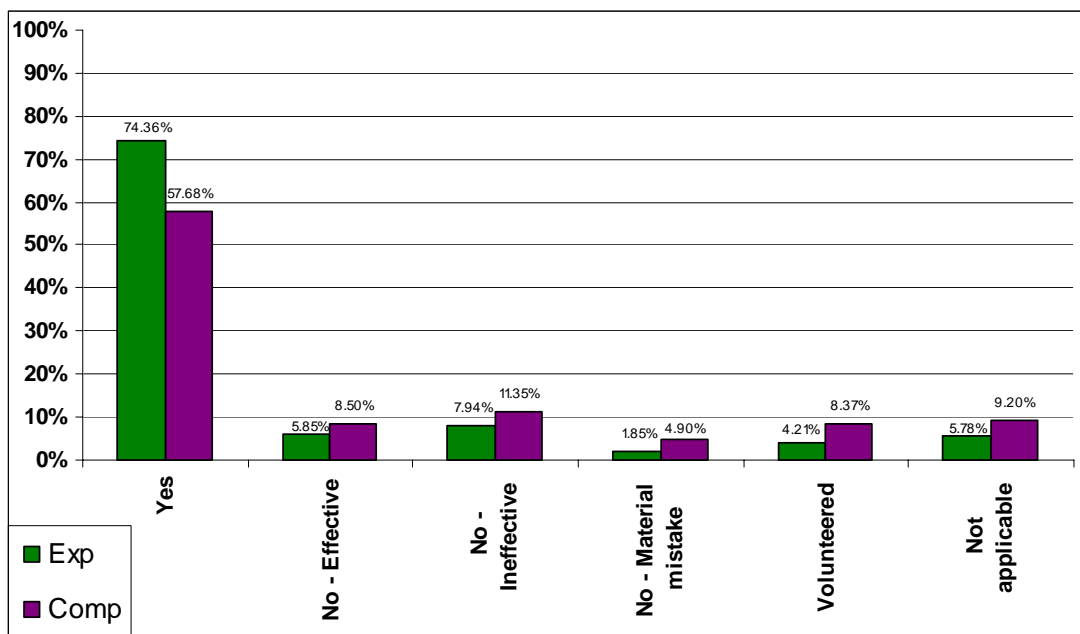
experimental group). The identity of the perpetrator is also determined here through open-ended, non-leading questioning.

The Mann-Whitney test was conducted and the p-value for phase four equalled 0.0025 (<0.05). Therefore there is a statistically significant difference between the comparison and experimental groups. Although no generalisations are made, the statistics showed interesting trends suggesting that this phase may well be regarded as a contribution to the social work profession in the context of forensic assessment interviews. However further research is needed.

### 6.5.5 Phase five: Questioning phase

The questioning phase consists of the use of clear and age-appropriate language, using a specific questioning format and applying forensic interviewing techniques to the questioning process (paragraph 5.4.5).

**Figure 6.28: Phase five: Questioning phase**



It is evident from figure 6.27 that both the interviewers from the comparison and experimental groups did comply to a certain degree to with what is expected. In

74.36% of the cases the interviewer from the experimental group, and in 57.68% of the cases, the interviewer of the comparison group complied with the proposed protocol.

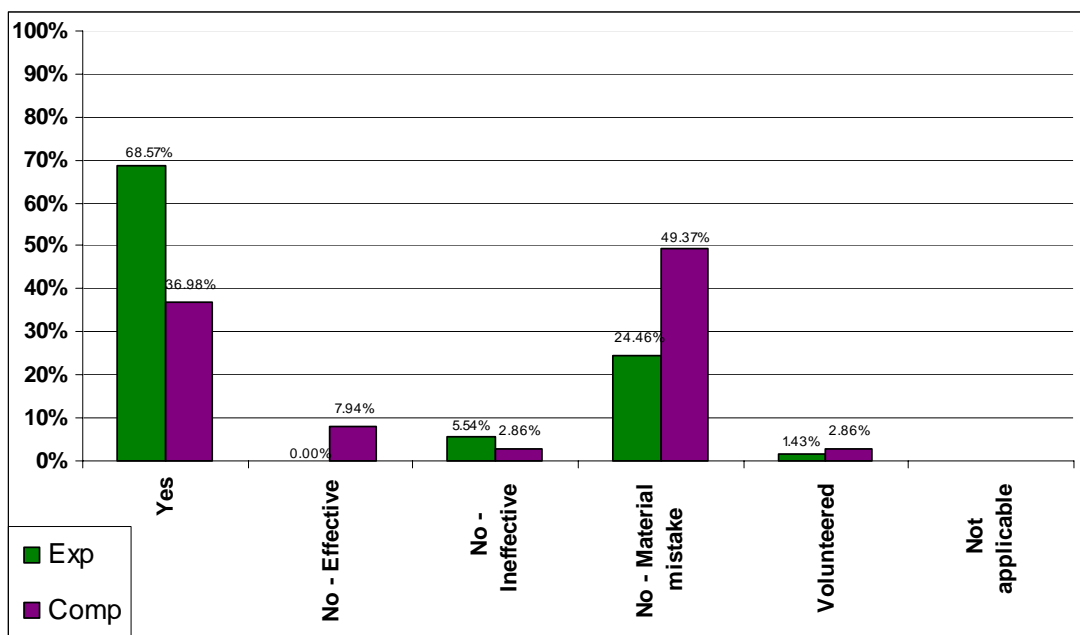
The Mann-Whitney test was conducted and the p-value for phase five was 0.0002 (<0.05), and therefore there is a statistically significant difference between the comparison and experimental groups.

From figure 6.27 statistics show that the questioning format as discussed and explained in paragraph 5.4.5.2 may perhaps not being optimally used in practice and suggest that this phase is a contribution to the social work profession in the context of forensic assessment interviews. Further research is needed due to the small sample used in this study

### 6.5.6 Phase 6: Investigating multiple hypotheses

Investigating multiple hypotheses was explained in paragraphs 5.4.6.

**Figure 6.29: Phase six: Investigating multiple hypotheses**



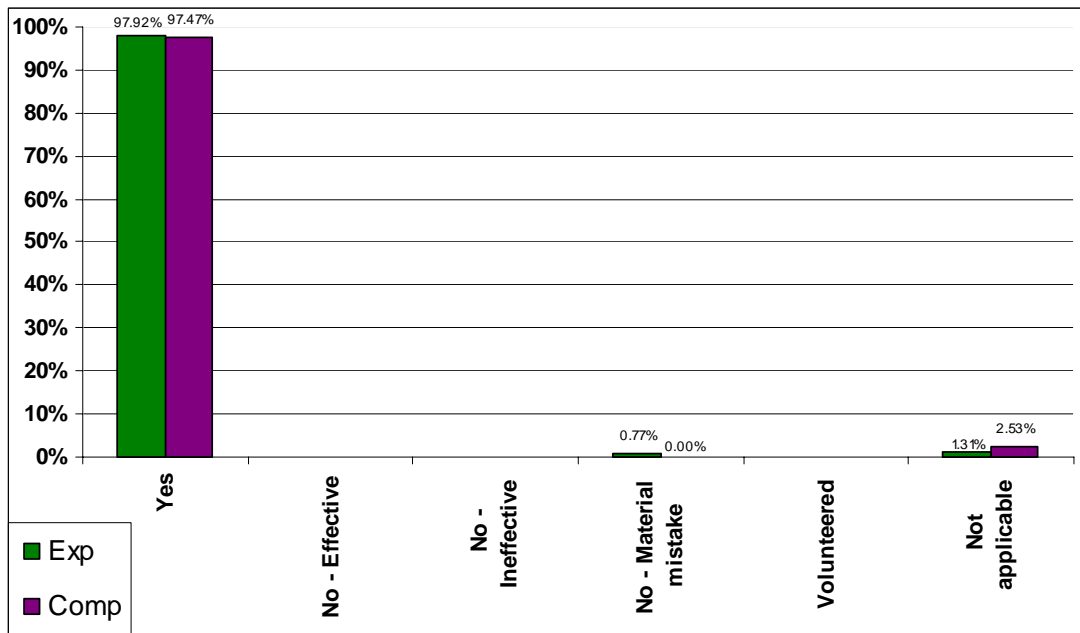
In 68.57% of the cases the interviewer of the experimental group explored multiple hypotheses as proposed by the newly developed protocol. In 1.43% of the time information was volunteered, bringing the total compliance to 70%. The interviewer from the comparison group complied 36.98% with the proposed protocol, and in 2.86% of the cases the information was volunteered, bringing the total compliance to 39.84%.

The Mann-Whitney test was conducted and the p-value for phase six was 0.0052 (<0.05), and therefore there is a statistically significant difference between the comparison and experimental groups. The results suggest that this phase is regarded as a contribution to the social work profession in the context of forensic assessment interviews.

### 6.5.7 Phase seven: Closure

The closure phase was discussed in paragraph 5.4.7.

**Figure 6.30: Phase seven: Closure**



In 97.92% of the cases the interviewer from the experimental group complied with what is expected according to the proposed seven-phase forensic interview protocol. In 1.31% of the cases these aspects were not applicable. The interviewer of the comparison group complied 97.47% with the proposed seven-phase forensic interview protocol, and in 2.53% of the cases it was not applicable.

From figure 6.29 it is evident that both interviewers complied with what was expected in the seven-phase forensic interview protocol. The Mann-Whitney test was conducted and the p-value for phase seven was 0.4411 ( $>0.05$ ), indicating that there is not a statistically significant difference between the comparison and experimental groups. The statistics therefore suggests that this phase is not a new contribution to the social work profession.

## 6.6 SUMMARY

The statistical analysis indicates that although the interviewer of the comparison group complied with several of the fundamentals of the proposed seven-phase interview protocol, she did not follow the proposed protocol as it is presented.

Due to the small sample used in this study no generalisations are made, but rather suggestions on possible contributions to the social work profession. Further research is needed.

The statistics suggest that ground rules are not explained during forensic interviews. It thus suggests a definite contribution to the field of social work. Conducting truth-and-lie and morality checks appear also not be used as a rule in practice and this suggest another contribution to the field of social work.

The use of pictures to explore the alleged sexual abuse has not been used at all by the interviewer of the comparison group. This thus suggests that the proposed step in the seven-phase forensic interview protocol may possibly be a new contribution to the field of social work.

The study shows that the investigating of multiple hypotheses might be another contribution to the social work field as it is seldom used in practice.

The data analysis also indicates that although the researcher was aware of what was expected from her, she still failed to adhere 100% to what is expected. This could be attributed to human error, loss of concentration, unique process of the child, nature of allegation and logistical arrangements like time constraints.

However, the seven-phase forensic interview protocol promises to provide social workers – young and old, inexperienced and experienced – with structured guidelines in order to assist them to conduct their interviews in a legally defensible manner. Further research is needed.

In chapter 7, the purpose, goal and objectives of the study will be evaluated. Summarised conclusions on the seven-phase forensic interview will be provided, followed by recommendations.