Reviewer's report

**Title:** Patterns of Child Sexual Abuse in Religiously-affiliated and Non-religiously-affiliated Institutions: Results of the Liaison Office of the Independent Commissioner for Victims in Germany

**Version:** 5  **Date:** 21 December 2013

**Reviewer:** Kate Walsh

**Reviewer's report:**

Major compulsory revisions

1. On page 4, the manuscript acknowledges recovery from abuse but it should also acknowledge resilience/resistance as a significant portion of abuse victims do not develop psychiatric/interpersonal problems.

2. On page 9, the manuscript states that factors common to all 3 settings were associated with abuse including group cohesion, hierarchical power structures, etc. This statement must be revised since there is no non-abused comparison group; thus, we cannot discern whether these factors are common to all Germans or just to abuse victims. I would suggest removing this statement in its entirety. A similar statement is made in the conclusions on page 12 and should be removed.

3. I would like to see some discussion of why this study is important given that institutionalization practices seem to be different currently in Germany and cases of abuse in religious institutions have decreased dramatically.

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.