North America: National Survey of Children Exposed to Violence

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Expert Consultation on Strengthening Data and Research to Protect Children from Violence
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National Survey of Children’s Exposure to Violence (NATSCEV)

- Survey conducted January 2008- May 2008
- National RDD sample of 4549 children age 0-17
- Telephone interviews with 2454 caregivers of children age 0-9
- Telephone interviews with 2095 youth age 10-17
- Respondents promised confidentiality and paid $20 for participation
- Interviews completed with 71% of eligible respondents contacted
Comprehensive epidemiology of childhood victimization

- Assessment of most comprehensive spectrum of victimization types to date (violence, abuse, crime, etc.)
- Entire age range of childhood (0-17)
- Advantages:
  - Understand full burden on children
  - See inter-relationships among exposures
  - Identify highest risk children
  - Appreciate developmental patterns
  - Promote collaboration, avoid fragmented response
JVQ
Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire
JVQ Modules

Module A: Conventional Crime
- Robbery
- Personal Theft
- Vandalism
- Assault with Weapon
- Assault without Weapon
- Attempted Assault
- Kidnapping
- Bias Attack

Module B: Child Maltreatment
- Physical Abuse by Caregiver
- Psychological/Emotional Abuse
- Neglect
- Custodial Interference/Family Abduction

Module C: Peer & Sibling Victimization
- Gang or Group Assault
- Peer or Sibling Assault
- Nonsexual Genital Assault
- Bullying
- Emotional bullying
- Dating Violence

Module D: Sexual Victimization
- Sexual Assault by Known Adult
- Nonspecific Sexual Assault
- Sexual Assault by Peer
- Rape: Attempted or Completed
- Flashing/Sexual Exposure
- Verbal Sexual Harassment
- Statutory Rape & Sexual Misconduct

Module E: Witnessing & Indirect Victimization
- Witness to Domestic Violence
- Witness to Parent Assault of Sibling
- Witness to Assault with Weapon
- Witness to Assault without Weapon
- Burglary of Family Household
- Murder of Family Member or Friend
- Witness to Murder
- Exposure to Random Shootings, Terrorism or Riots
- Exposure to War or Ethnic Conflict
NatSCEV JVQ Additions

- **Community Crime Exposure**
  - Family/friend Sexual Assault
  - Family/ friend Robbed
  - Family/friend Gun Threat

- **Family Abuse Exposure**
  - Parents Threaten Other Parent
  - Parents Break Objects
  - Parents Push Other Parent
  - Parents Slap, Choke, Beat Up
  - Any Teen or Grown-up Fight in Household

- **School Violence Threat**
  - Threaten School Bomb or Attack
  - School Vandalism

- **Internet Victimization**
  - Internet Harassment
  - Internet Sexual Victimizations
Major Victimization Types by Victim Age

3-year running average
Victimization in Last Year
Total and Selected Aggregates
(Children 0-17, N=4549)
Physical Assaults, Bullying and Teasing in the Past Year

- 46% of the sample reported a physical assault
- 10% reported an assault-related injury
- 13% reported bullying and 20% reported being teased and harassed
- Boys have higher rates of most assault and bullying victimizations
- Physical assaults with no injury and bullying highest among elementary school age children (6-9)
- Other assault categories and dating violence highest among teenagers
- Assault perpetrators most often juvenile acquaintances and siblings
Sexual Victimization in the Past Year

- 8% of the 14-17 yo girls reported a sexual assault; 3% of boys
- Sexual victimizations highest among female teenagers
- Adult perpetrators responsible for 15% of total sexual victimizations and 29% of sexual assaults
- Most sexual victimizations perpetrated by acquaintances
Child Maltreatment in the Past Year

10% of sample reported some form of child maltreatment; 17% of 14-17 y o

- Emotional abuse most common
- Physical abuse 8% 14-17 y o. 20% life time
- Rates similar for boys and girls (except sexual abuse)
- Rates lowest for pre-school age children
Property Victimizations in the Past Year

25% of the sample reported property victimizations

- 5% experienced robbery, 7% theft, and 6% vandalism by non-siblings
- Boys have higher rates of property victimizations
- Most often perpetrated by juvenile acquaintances
Odds Ratios for Occurrence of Other Victimization Type Given One Victimization Type

• Of those with 1 type of direct victimization, 64.5% had 2 or more types of victimization
• 10.9% ≥ 5 types of victimization (PY), 1.4% ≥ 10 types (PY)

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<th>Any Physical Assault</th>
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<th>Any Maltreatment</th>
<th>Any Property Victimization</th>
<th>Any Witness Violence</th>
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Key contributions

• New estimates not previously available, in particular of the full spectrum of child victimization
• Estimates over full span of childhood
• How many kids suffer from a single and multiple types of exposures
• Increased risk created by any exposure
• Implications:
  - Need to ask about the full spectrum of victimization experiences (dating violence, emotional maltreatment, property victimization, exposure to violence in family and community)
  - Need a more integrated approach among policy makers, programme designers, and practitioners that addresses the full spectrum
Violence, Abuse, and Crime Exposure in a National Sample of Children and Youth

What's Known on This Subject: Children and adolescents are exposed to more violence, abuse, and crime than are adults, an exposure that is responsible for considerable physical and mental health morbidity.

What This Study Adds: This study gives precise dimensions of exposure to a wide range of specific forms of violence, abuse, and crime at different developmental stages, and demonstrates how some children and adolescents accumulate a very large number of these exposures.

Abstract

Objective: The objective of this research was to obtain national estimates of exposure to the full spectrum of the childhood violence, abuse, and crime victimizations relevant to both clinical practice and public policy approaches to the problem.

Methods: The study was based on a cross-sectional national telephone survey that involved a target sample of 4349 children aged 0 to 17 years.

Results: A clear majority (60.9%) of the children and youth in this nationally representative sample had experienced at least 1 direct or witnessed victimization in the previous year. Almost half (46.2%) had experienced a physical assault in the study year, 1 in 4 (24.9%) had experienced a property offense, 1 in 10 (10.2%) had experienced a form of child maltreatment, 6.1% had experienced a sexual victimization, and more than 1 in 4 (23.5%) had been a witness to violence or experienced another form of indirect victimization in the year, including 9.3% who had witnessed an intrafamily assault. One in 10 (10.2%) had experienced a victimization-related injury. More than one third (38.1%) had been exposed to 2 or more direct victimizations, 10.9% had 3 or more, and 2.4% had 10 or more during the study year.

Conclusions: The scope and diversity of child exposure to victimization is not well recognized. Clinicians and researchers need to inquire about a larger spectrum of victimization types to identify multiply victimized children and tailor prevention and interventions to the full range of threats that children face. Pediatrics 2008;124:900
Children’s Exposure to Violence:
A Comprehensive National Survey

David Finkelhor, Heather Turner, Richard Ormrod, Sherry Hamby, and Kristen Knacke

This Bulletin discusses the National Survey of Children’s Exposure to Violence (NatSCV), the most comprehensive nationwide survey of the incidence and prevalence of children’s exposure to violence as of date, sponsored by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Conducted between January and May 2008, it measured the past-year and lifetime exposure to violence for children aged 17 and younger across several major categories: conventional crime, child maltreatment, victimization by peers and siblings, sexual victimization, witnessing and indirect victimization (including exposure to community violence and family violence), school violence and threats, and Internet victimization. (For more detailed information on the types of violence that children were questioned about, see “Screwing Questions” on page 2.) This survey is the first comprehensive attempt to measure children’s exposure to violence in the home, school, and community across all age groups from birth to age 17, and the first attempt to measure the cumulative exposure to violence over the child’s lifetime.

The survey confirms that most of our society’s children are exposed to violence in their daily lives. More than 69 percent of the children surveyed who were exposed to violence within the past year, either directly or indirectly (i.e., as a witness to a violent act by learning of a violent act against a family member, neighbor, or close friend; or from a threat against their home or school) (for full details on these and other statistics cited in this Bulletin, see Finkelhor et al., 2009). Nearly one-half of the children and adolescents surveyed (46.5 percent) were assaulted at least once in the past year, and more than 1 in 10 (10.2 percent) were injured in an assault; 1 in 4 (24.6 percent) were victims of robbery, vandalism, or theft; 1 in 16 (6.1 percent) were victimized sexually. More than 1 in 4 (25.9 percent) witnessed a violent act.

A Message From OJJDP

Children are exposed to violence every day in their homes, schools, and communities. They may be struck by a boyfriend, bullied by a classmate, or abused by an adult. They may witness an assault on a parent or a shooting on the street. Such exposure can cause significant physical, mental, and emotional harm with long-term effects that can last well into adulthood.

In 1999, OJJDP created the Safe Start Initiative to prevent and reduce the impact of children’s exposure to violence through enhanced practice, research, evaluation, training, and technical assistance, resources, and outreach. The Initiative has improved the delivery of developmentally appropriate services for children exposed to violence and their families.

Understanding the nature and extent of children’s exposure to violence is essential to combating its effects. Partnering with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, OJJDP has sponsored the most comprehensive effort to date to measure children’s exposure to violence. The National Survey of Children’s Exposure to Violence is the first survey to ask children and caregivers about exposure to a range of violent incidents and maltreatment

As simply evidenced in this Bulletin, children’s exposure to violence is pervasive and crosses all ages. The research findings reported here are critical to informing our efforts to protect children from its damaging effects.
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