



National Institute of Justice

Research in Brief

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March 1995

Issues and Findings

Discussed in the Brief: Previous research established evidence for a “cycle of violence”: people who were abused and neglected in childhood are more likely than those who were not to become involved in criminal behavior, including violent crime, later in life. This Research in Brief, the second in a series on the cycle of violence, examines the criminal consequences in adulthood of a particular type of childhood victimization: sexual abuse. It traces the same individuals studied initially, using official records of arrest and juvenile detention.

Key issues:

- Whether sexual abuse—more than other forms of childhood victimization—makes people more likely to become involved in delinquent and criminal behavior later in life.
- Whether sexual abuse during childhood makes it more likely that these victims will be charged with a sex crime as an adult.
- Whether there is a “pathway” from being sexually abused as a child, to running away as a juvenile, to being arrested for prostitution as an adult.

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Victims of Childhood Sexual Abuse— Later Criminal Consequences

by Cathy Spatz Widom

Over the past 25 years, much has been written about the “cycle of violence” or the “intergenerational transmission of violence.” These terms refer to the possible negative consequences later in life for children who are sexually or physically abused or neglected. These consequences include an increased potential for violent behavior. In earlier work the researcher examined criminal records on more than 1,500 individuals to determine whether the experience of abuse or neglect during childhood increased the likelihood of arrest as a juvenile or young adult. The research clearly revealed that a childhood history of physical abuse predisposes the survivor to violence in later years, and that victims of neglect are more likely to engage in later violent criminal behavior as well.

Of all types of childhood maltreatment, physical abuse was the most likely to be associated with arrest for a violent crime later in life. The group next most likely to be arrested for a violent offense were those who had experienced neglect in childhood, a finding of particular interest. Though a more “passive” form of maltreatment, neglect has been associated with an array of developmental problems, and the finding extended that array to include greater risk of later criminal violence.¹

Focus on sexual abuse

This Research in Brief reports the findings from an analysis of a specific type of maltreatment—childhood sexual abuse—and its possible association with criminal behavior later in life.² Using the same cases of individuals studied previously, the researcher sought to find out whether those who had been sexually abused were more likely to engage in later delinquent and criminal behavior than those who had experienced the other types of abuse. Is there an “inevitable” or likely progression from being sexually victimized in childhood to being charged with an offense in adulthood, particularly sex offenses.

This examination is part of a two-phase study of the long-term consequences of childhood abuse and neglect. The findings reported here are from the first phase, which used the arrest records of juveniles and adults to measure the criminal consequences of being maltreated. In the second phase, now underway, interviews are being conducted in an attempt to draw a more complete picture of such consequences. The researcher is looking at criminal behavior that may not have been included in official records and at other negative outcomes, including mental health, educational, substance abuse, and other

Issues and Findings

continued . . .

Key findings:

- People who were sexually victimized during childhood are at higher risk of arrest for committing crimes as adults, including sex crimes, than are people who did not suffer sexual or physical abuse or neglect during childhood. However, the risk of arrest for childhood sexual abuse victims as adults is no higher than for victims of other types of childhood abuse and neglect.
- The vast majority of childhood sexual abuse victims are not arrested for sex crimes or any other crimes as adults.
- Compared to victims of childhood physical abuse and neglect, victims of childhood sexual abuse are at greater risk of being arrested for one type of sex crime: prostitution.
- For the specific sex crimes of rape and sodomy, victims of physical abuse tended to be at greater risk for committing those crimes than were sexual abuse victims and people who had not been victimized.
- What might seem to be a logical progression from childhood sexual abuse to running away to prostitution was not borne out. The adults arrested for prostitution were not the runaways identified in this study.

Target audience: Law enforcement officials, child protection service professionals, researchers, judges, family counselors, and victim service organizations and agencies.

problems. (See “Preview of Work in Progress.”)

Evidence from other studies

The link between childhood sexual abuse and negative consequences for the victims later in life has been examined in clinical reports and research studies in the past two decades. Frequently reported consequences include acting-out behaviors, such as running away, truancy, conduct disorder, delinquency, promiscuity, and inappropriate sexual behavior. Studies of prostitutes have also revealed an association between sexual abuse during childhood and deviant and criminal behavior.

These and other findings have been the basis for theories linking childhood sexual abuse to the development of deviant and criminal behavior later in life. Among researchers as well as clinicians, acceptance of this link is fairly widespread. However, as a review of research into the impact of childhood sexual abuse has indicated, the empirical evidence may not be sufficient to justify this acceptance.³ And, a recent review of the long-term effects of childhood sexual abuse—which cited sexual disturbance, depression, suicide, revictimization, and postsexual abuse syndrome—noted criminal consequences only in passing.⁴

The need for a new approach

The methods used to conduct these studies make interpretation difficult. For one thing, most used retrospective self-reports of adults who had been sexually abused as children; that is, they relied on the subjects’ own recall. Retrospective accounts of sexual abuse may be subject to bias or error. For example, unconscious denial (or repression of traumatic events in childhood) may prevent recollection of severe cases of childhood

sexual abuse. It is also possible that people forget or redefine their behaviors in accordance with later life circumstances and their current situation.

Another difficulty with these methods lies with their reliance on correlation. They involve data collection at only one point in time. In examining the relationship between sexual abuse and later delinquent behavior or adult criminality, it is important to ensure the correct temporal sequence of events; that is, to make certain that the incident of childhood sexual abuse clearly *preceded* (not followed) delinquency. Thus, multiple data collection points are needed. The few studies that do not rely on retrospection have investigated consequences only over relatively short periods of time.

Perhaps the most serious methodological shortcoming is the frequent lack of appropriate control or comparison groups. Childhood sexual abuse often occurs in the context of multiproblem homes, and sexual victimization of children may be only one of these problems. Without control groups, the effects of other family characteristics, such as poverty, unemployment, parental alcoholism or drug problems, or other inadequate social and family functioning, cannot be easily disentangled from the specific effects of sexual abuse.

The present study

The study posed three questions designed to shed light on the possible long-term criminal consequences of childhood sexual abuse:

- **Is there a higher risk of criminal behavior later in life?** Compared to early childhood experiences of physical abuse and neglect (and also compared to children who did not experience maltreatment, at least as documented by official records), does sexual abuse in early

childhood increase the risk of delinquent and criminal behavior?

● **Is there a higher risk of committing sex crimes?** Are childhood sexual abuse victims more likely to commit such crimes as prostitution, rape, and sodomy?

● **Is there a link between sexual abuse, running away, and prostitution?** Is there a significant and direct relationship between early childhood sexual abuse, being arrested as a runaway as an adolescent, and, in turn, being arrested for prostitution as an adult?

How the study was conducted⁵

The study examined the official criminal histories of a large number of people whose sexual victimization during childhood had been validated. These victims of sexual abuse were compared to cases of physical abuse and neglect and to a control group of individuals who were closely matched in age, race, sex, and approximate family socioeconomic status.

The groups selected for study. The subjects were 908 individuals who had been subjected as children to abuse (physical or sexual) or neglect, and whose cases

were processed through the courts between 1967 and 1971. All were 11 years of age or younger at the time of the incident(s).

The research used a “matched cohorts” design. Such studies involve selecting groups of subjects who are similar (matched) to each other but who differ in the characteristic being studied. The “cohort” of children who had been abused or neglected was matched with the control group, which consisted of children who had not been abused or neglected.

Both groups were followed into adolescence and young adulthood to determine if they had engaged in delinquent behavior or had committed crimes as adults. At the time they were chosen for the study, none of them had as yet engaged in delinquent or criminal behavior. The major aim of this analysis was to determine whether sexual abuse during childhood puts victims at greater risk for criminal behavior later in life than do the other types of maltreatment.

Sources of information about maltreatment. Because it was important to use substantiated cases of physical and sexual abuse and neglect, the study relied on the official records of agencies that handled these cases. Detailed information about the abuse and/or neglect incident and family composition and characteristics of study subjects was obtained from the files of the juvenile court and probation department. The records of the sexual abuse cases were obtained from the juvenile court and from the adult criminal court of a metropolitan area in the Midwest.⁶

Like all sources of information, official records have certain limitations. Some incidents are not reported to law enforcement or social service agencies.

I Preview of Work in Progress

If someone commits a crime but is not apprehended, the crime will not appear in official arrest records. For this reason, in studying the link between childhood victimization and negative consequences in adulthood, including criminal behavior, it is important to examine evidence from other sources. In addition, victims of childhood abuse and neglect may manifest problems other than criminal behavior later in life, and these too cannot be traced through arrest records.

The first phase of this study relied exclusively on official records to document incidents of delinquency and criminality. Because of the limitations of this type of record, the second phase, begun in 1989, used interviews. An attempt is being made to locate as many as possible of the 1,575 people who were studied during the first phase, for the in-person interviews. Since the abuse and/or neglect incidents took place some 20 years ago, most of these people had become young adults in their early 20’s and 30’s by the time of the interviews.

Information from the interviews is being used to document a number of long-term consequences of childhood victimization, including social, emotional, cognitive and intellectual, occupational, psychiatric, and general health outcomes. Substance abuse is also being studied. Parental alcohol use has been identified in previous research as a risk factor for child abuse, and recent research considers alcohol use to be a possible consequence of early childhood victimization. In view of these intergenerational links, the study will focus on the connections between child abuse, alcohol abuse, and violence.

In addition, because many victimized children appeared not to exhibit adverse effects of abuse and neglect, the research will examine the influence of “protective” factors that might have buffered them from developing negative outcomes, particularly violent criminal behavior.

Data collection and analysis are projected for completion in 1995, and the findings will be prepared for publication. Support received from the National Institute of Justice has been supplemented by a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health.

Moreover, the cases studied were processed before the child abuse reporting laws were passed, when many cases of sexual abuse were not brought to the attention of the authorities. For these reasons, the findings cannot be interpreted as applying to all incidents. It is more likely that they represented only the serious and extreme cases—those brought to the attention of the social service and criminal justice systems.

Types of maltreatment. The *sexual abuse* cases represented a variety of charges, from relatively nonspecific ones of “assault and battery with intent to gratify sexual desires” to more specific ones of “fondling or touching in an obscene manner,” sodomy, incest, and the like. The *physical abuse* cases included those involving injuries such as bruises, welts, burns, abrasions, lacerations, wounds, cuts, bone and skull fractures. The *neglect cases* reflected the judgment of the court that the parents’ deficiencies in child care were beyond those found acceptable by community and professional standards at the time. They represented extreme failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, and medical attention.

Subgroups created for the study. A case was identified as involving sexual abuse if there was evidence in the records that the charge had been substantiated. Of these cases, most involved sexual abuse only, but some involved physical abuse and/or neglect in addition. Because exposure to these different types of abuse may have different consequences, distinctions were made. Cases involving only sexual abuse are referenced as *Sexual Abuse Only*. The others are referred to as *Sexual Abuse Plus* (sexual abuse plus physical abuse or neglect). (table 1.)

The sources of information for delinquency and crime. Finding out whether the subjects had become delinquent and/or committed crime as adults required identifying accurate sources of information about these types of behavior. The researcher decided to use official arrest records as the source, for a number of reasons. They are relatively easy to locate and contain reasonably complete information. The source of information about delinquent juveniles was the files of the juvenile probation department.

Criminal consequences

In general, people who experience any type of maltreatment during childhood—whether sexual abuse, physical abuse, or neglect—are more likely than people who were not maltreated to be arrested later in life. This is true for juvenile as well as adult arrests. As the figures in table 2 indicate, 26 percent of the people who were abused and/or neglected were later arrested as juveniles, compared with only 16.8 percent of the people who were not. The figures for adults also indicate a greater likelihood of arrest among people who were maltreated during childhood.

For certain specific offenses, the likelihood of arrest is also greater among people who were abused and/or neglected. (These figures are not presented in tabular format.) For example, 14.3 percent of the people who were abused or neglected as children were later charged with property crimes as juveniles, while this was true for only 8.5 percent of the controls. A similar difference in the rate of property crime arrests was found among adults. Childhood abuse and neglect were also associated with later arrest for drug-related offenses. More than 8 percent

of the individuals abused or neglected as children were arrested for these offenses as adults, compared to only 5.2 percent of the control group.

Sexual abuse. All types of abuse and neglect in childhood put people at greater risk for arrest later in life. But an important finding of this study is that, in cases of sexual abuse, the risk is no greater than for other types of maltreatment. (See table 2.) In other words, the victims of sexual abuse are no more likely than other victims to become involved with crime.

A breakdown of the types of offenses reveals one exception. People who were victimized during childhood by either physical abuse or neglect *in addition to* sexual abuse (the Sexual Abuse Plus group) were more likely than those subjected to other types of maltreatment (and also more likely than the controls) to be arrested as runaways during their juvenile years.

Likelihood of arrest for sex crimes

Could it be that additional breakdowns of types of offenses would reveal greater risk for individuals who were sexually abused in childhood? Previ-

Table 1: Types of Child Victimization Cases

Type	Number of Cases
Physical Abuse and Neglect	70
Physical Abuse Only	76
Neglect Only	609
Sexual Abuse Only	125
Sexual Abuse Plus (Sexual abuse with physical abuse and/or neglect)	28
Total	908

Table 2: Likelihood of Arrest Depending on Type of Abuse Experienced

Type of Abuse Subjects	Number of Arrests	Any Juvenile Arrest %	Any Adult Arrest %
All Cases of Abuse and Neglect	908	26.0***	28.6***
Any Sexual Abuse	153	22.2	20.3
Any Physical Abuse	146	19.9	27.4
Any Neglect	609	28.4	30.7
Control Group	667	16.8	21.0

Note: the asterisks indicate instances in which the differences between all cases of abuse/neglect and the control groups were statistically significant.

***p<.001 (The probability is less than 1 in 1,000 that the occurrence could have happened by chance.)

ous research indicating that these people are more likely to be arrested for sex crimes suggests this might be the case.

Sex crimes in general. Arrest records revealed that, compared to children who had not been victimized, those who had been were more likely to be arrested for sex crimes. Thus, experiencing any type of abuse/neglect in childhood increases the risk for sex crimes. Children who were sexually abused were about as likely as neglect victims to be arrested for any sex crime and less likely than victims of physical abuse. (See table 3.)

Calculating the *odds* that abused and neglected children will subsequently be arrested for sex crimes as adults confirmed the statistics on likelihood of arrest. For abused and neglected children in general, the odds of being arrested as adults for a sex crime were higher than for nonvictims. Among sexually abused children, the odds were 4.7 times higher. Among physically abused children, the odds of arrest as adults for a sex crime were only a bit less—more than four times higher than for the controls. Neglected children were also at in-

creased risk of subsequent arrest for a sex crime (2.2 times the rate for the controls). (See table 3.)

Specific sex crimes. The study also looked at various types of sex crimes, and the breakdown revealed more complexity. The differences among the groups in arrest for one particular sex crime, prostitution, were significant. Arrests for this crime were rare, but child sex abuse victims were more likely to be charged with it than were victims of physical abuse and neglect. (Table 4.) The same is true for the odds. Among children who were sexually abused, the odds are 27.7 times higher than for the control group of being arrested for prostitution as an adult.⁷ For rape or sodomy, childhood victims of physical abuse were found to be at higher risk of arrest than either other victims or the controls, and the odds of arrest for these crimes were 7.6 times higher than for the controls.

From sexual abuse to running away to prostitution—Is the path inevitable? It may seem logical to assume that children who are sexually abused follow a direct path from being victimized to becoming a runaway as

an adolescent, and then becoming a prostitute as an adult. The findings of the current research support the first part of this relationship; 5.8 percent of abused and neglected children became runaways, compared with only 2.4 percent of the controls.

As noted earlier, the researcher found that sexually abused children were more likely than other victims to be arrested for prostitution as adults, and the odds were higher that a sexually abused child would be charged with prostitution as an adult (table 4). But are juvenile runaways subsequently charged with prostitution? The researcher looked at all runaways in the sample studied, both the victimized groups and the control group. When some of these runaways became adults, they were charged with sex crimes. None of the runaways were arrested for prostitution, however.

Thus, the findings do not support the notion of a direct causal link between childhood victimization, becoming a runaway, and in turn being arrested for prostitution. Some adults were found to be arrested for prostitution, but they were not the runaways in this sample.

Understanding the aftermath of childhood sexual abuse

All types of childhood abuse and neglect put the victims at higher risk for criminal behavior. However, the particular type of victimization suffered by children who are sexually abused does not set them apart. It does not put them at an even higher risk of arrest, for they are no more likely than children who are physically abused or neglected to be charged with a crime later in life.

Table 3: Likelihood and Odds of Being Arrested for Any Sex Crime^a

Type of Childhood Victimization	Number of Subjects	Likelihood ^b %	Odds ^c
Any Sexual Abuse	153	3.9	4.7
Any Physical Abuse	146	6.2	4.1
Any Neglect	609	3.6	2.2
Control Group	667	1.6	—

^aSex crimes include prostitution, incest, child molestation, rape, sodomy, assault and battery with intent to gratify, peeping, public indecency, criminal deviant conduct, and contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

^bp<.02

^cThe numbers are odds ratios. They depict the odds that a person who has experienced a certain type of childhood abuse or neglect will commit a sex crime. Thus, for example, the odds that a childhood sexual abuse victim will be arrested as an adult for any sex crime is 4.7 times higher than for people in the control group, who experienced no victimization as children. (In calculating these odds, sex, age, and race were taken into account.)

The same is true for sex crimes. People victimized by sexual abuse as children are also significantly more likely than nonvictims to be arrested for a sex crime, although no more so than victims of physical abuse and neglect.

This similarity among all three groups of maltreatment victims suggests that for sexual abuse victims, the criminal effect later in life may result not from the specifically sexual nature of the incident but rather from the trauma and stress of these early childhood experiences or society’s response to them.

For prostitution, the likelihood is greater. For prostitution, findings were consistent with those of previous studies: childhood sexual abuse victims run a greater risk than other maltreatment victims of being arrested for prostitution. The percentage of sexual abuse victims arrested for this offense was low, however (3.3 percent).

From runaway to prostitute? As noted earlier, while the findings support the existence of a link between

sexual abuse in childhood and becoming a runaway as a juvenile, they do not support a subsequent link to adult prostitution. That is, being arrested as an adolescent runaway does not predispose people who were sexually abused as children to be arrested for prostitution as adults.

The current research is limited because of its exclusive reliance on official criminal histories. Certainly, such records underestimate the number of runaways, since many of them may be brought to the attention of social service agencies without being arrested. For this reason, other types of data should be examined. However, the fact that none of the runaways identified in this study were arrested for prostitution (while other individuals were) suggests that the connection is at least not as strong as would have been previously thought.

Other sex crimes. Childhood sexual abuse victims were not at greater risk later in life of arrest for rape or sodomy. Rather, the findings reveal an

association between these crimes and childhood physical abuse, not sexual abuse. Males who were physically abused in childhood showed a greater tendency than other abused and neglected children and the controls to be arrested for these types of sex crimes. This is consistent with earlier findings regarding the “cycle of violence,” which indicated that physical abuse in childhood is associated with the highest rates of arrest for violence later in life.⁸ Thus, the violent aspect of rape rather than its sexual component or sexual motivation may explain the association. Indeed, practitioners and clinicians who work with these victims commonly refer to rape as a crime of violence, not simply a sex crime.

Patterns of offending

Tentative evidence is offered here to support the notion that when sexual abuse is differentiated by type, the subsequent patterns of juvenile and adult offending are also different. The *Sexual Abuse Plus* group tended to be at greater risk for running away, particularly compared to the other abuse and neglect groups and the controls. Other analysis showed this group more often victimized by family members or relatives in their own homes than the *Sexual Abuse Only* group. If one’s home is abusive in multiple ways, it is not surprising that the victims would resort to running away as an escape.

These tentative differences suggest that studies of the long-term consequences of childhood sexual abuse might find it worthwhile to disaggregate sexual abuse experiences into groups consisting exclusively of sexual abuse and groups consisting of sexual abuse in conjunction with other childhood victimization. Future research might examine the question of whether

the effect of multiple forms of abuse is additive.

Criminal behavior is not the inevitable outcome

The link between early childhood sexual abuse and later delinquent and adult criminal behavior is not inevitable. Although it is clear that individuals who were sexually abused in childhood are at increased risk of arrest as juveniles and adults, many do not become delinquents or adult criminals. In fact **the majority of the sexually abused children in this study do not have an official criminal history as adults.** Long-term consequences of childhood sexual abuse may be manifest across a number of domains of psychological distress and dysfunction, but not necessarily in criminal behavior. Delinquency and criminality represent only one possible type of outcome of childhood sexual abuse. A number of researchers have described depression, anxiety, self-destructive behavior, and low self-esteem among adults who were sexually abused in childhood. Further research with these samples is underway to document the long-term effects of childhood victimization in a broad array of outcomes. (See “Preview of Work in Progress.”)

Implications for policy

In planning and implementing treatment and prevention programs for children who are sexually abused, practitioners need to keep in mind that these children are in no sense destined for later involvement in criminal behavior. Like other victims of abuse and neglect, the majority will manifest no such negative outcome, at least as evidenced by official records of arrest. However, interventions need to be grounded in the knowledge that childhood victims of sexual abuse, as well as other types of abuse and neglect, are at increased risk for criminal involvement compared to nonvictims.

The need to avoid projecting criminal outcomes for sexually abused children has to be balanced by awareness of the particular risks they face. For example, interventions for sexually abused children should be informed by knowing that the likelihood of becoming a juvenile runaway is not only greater than among nonvictims, but also greater than for other types of childhood maltreatment victims. In developing interventions, it is also important to consider the higher risk for later prostitution that sexual abuse victims face. The health threat posed,

not only with respect to the more conventional sexually transmitted diseases, but particularly to HIV infection, makes the need for prevention interventions directed at childhood sexual abuse even more urgent.

According to this study, child victims arrested as runaways are not arrested for prostitution as adults.

As the example of prostitution makes clear, outcomes later in life may differ with the type of victimization experienced in childhood. This makes it evident that not all types of childhood maltreatment are alike and makes it incumbent on practitioners to craft responses that meet particular needs. While practitioners need to be aware that sexually abused children are at greater risk of becoming juvenile runaways, they also need to temper that awareness with the knowledge that these runaways are not necessarily “tracked” into prostitution as adults.

Information from the interview phase of the study is likely to bring further nuances to light. If running away does not necessarily lead to prostitution, it may nonetheless place the victim at risk in ways that are not documented in the arrest record.

The interviews may also shed light on intervening factors that mediate between the experience of victimization in childhood and behavioral outcomes in adulthood. Again, prostitution is an example. Since prostitutes have

Table 4: Likelihood and Odds of Being Arrested for a Specific Sex Crime

Type of Childhood Victimization	Number of Subjects	Prostitution		Rape or Sodomy	
		Likelihood ^a %	Odds ^b	Likelihood %	Odds ^b
Any Sexual Abuse	153	3.3	27.7	0.7	^c
Any Physical Abuse	146	0.7	^c	2.1	7.6
Any Neglect	609	1.5	10.2	1.1	^c
Control Group	667	0.1	—	0.4	—

^ap<.003

^bSee Note C on table 3.

^cNot statistically significant. All other findings on odds were significant at the p<.05 level.

diverse backgrounds, it is unlikely that any single factor (for example, childhood victimization) explains their entrance into this type of life. While early sexual abuse places a child at increased risk, many other factors play a role, and these factors may emerge in the interviews. If such factors are identified, they would necessarily affect the way practitioners intervene for child victims.

Future directions

Researchers have recently begun to acknowledge that studies of the impact of childhood abuse (including sexual abuse) find substantially large groups of individuals who appear to have experienced little or no long-term negative consequences. There are a number of possible explanations, among them inadequate measurement techniques on the part of the researchers. It is also possible that some factors or characteristics of the abuse incident (less severity, for example), or some characteristics of the child (having effective coping skills, for example) or the child’s environment

(having a close relationship with a supportive person, for example) may have served as a buffer from the long-term consequences. Protective factors in the lives of abused and neglected children need to be uncovered.

Future studies need to examine cases in which children appear to have overcome, or been protected from, the negative consequences of their early childhood experiences with abuse. The knowledge from such studies would have important implications for developing prevention and treatment programs for children who experience early childhood victimization. These “protective factors” are being explored as part of the study now being conducted by the present researcher.

Notes

1. A summary of this research is in Widom, Cathy Spatz, *The Cycle of Violence*, Research in Brief, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, October 1992. The document can be obtained from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service, Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20849-6000; call 800-851-3420 or order through the Internet at lookncjrs@aspensys.com.
2. A fuller presentation is in Widom, C. S., and Ames, M. A., “Criminal Consequences of Childhood

Sexual Victimization,” *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 18 (1994):303-318.

3. Browne, A., and Finkelhor, D., “Impact of Sexual Abuse: A Review of the Research,” *Psychological Bulletin*, 99 (1986):66-77.

4. Beitchman, J. H., et al., “A Review of the Long-Term Effects of Child Sexual Abuse,” *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 16 (1992):101-118.

5. A full description of the research design is in Widom, Cathy Spatz, “Child Abuse, Neglect, and Adult Behavior: Research Design and Findings on Criminality, Violence, and Child Abuse,” *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 59 (1989):355-67.

6. Of the 153 cases of sexual abuse, 40 were processed in juvenile court and 113 in adult criminal court.

7. In calculating the odds, the researcher controlled for the person’s sex, race, and age, as these factors may affect the likelihood of being arrested for a crime.

8. See Widom, *Cycle of Violence*: 3.

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Findings and conclusions of the research reported here are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

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NCJ 151525

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