

**ARTICLE:**

Finkelhor, D., Ormrod, R., Turner, H., & Hamby, S. L. (2010). School, police, and medical authority involvement with children who have experienced victimization. *Archives of Pediatric Adolescent Medicine*, 165(1), 9-15.

**SUMMARY:**

The purpose of this study was to examine the degree to which authorities know about victimization in a contemporary cohort of children and adolescents.

**Subjects/Design:**

The National Survey of Children's Exposure to Violence (NATSCEV) was designed to obtain one-year and lifetime prevalence estimates of a wide range of childhood/adolescent victimizations. It was conducted during 2008 with a nationally representative sample of 4,549 children between the ages of 0-17. A short interview with an adult caregiver in each household was conducted to obtain demographic information. If the selected individual was between 0-9, the caregiver was interviewed to elicit information about the child's experiences. If the selected individual was age 10-17, the child was interviewed to obtain this same information. The survey used an enhanced version of the Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire (JVQ) – an inventory of childhood victimization covering five primary areas:

1. Conventional crime
2. Maltreatment
3. Victimization by peers and siblings
4. Sexual Victimization
5. Witnessing and indirect exposure to violence

Follow-up questions for each victimization item gathered additional information about each event. This study only considers the victimizations which occurred during the past year.

**Findings:**

1. 58.3% of the sample reported at least one victimization in the past year (included bullying but did not include exposure to domestic violence)
2. Of these victims, 45.7% had at least one victimization known to authorities
3. The victimizations most likely known to authorities were typically of a serious nature:
  - a. Sexual abuse by a known adult (69.0%)
  - b. Sexual abuse by a non-specified adult (76.1%)
  - c. Kidnapping (73.5%)
  - d. Gang or group assault (70.1%)

4. The victimizations least likely known to authorities were:
  - a. Peer and sibling assault (16.9%)
  - b. Dating violence (15.2%)
  - c. Sexual exposure/being flashed (16.6%)
  - d. Completed and attempted rape (14.0%)
  - e. Statutory rape (3.4%)
5. School authorities tended to know about victimization events (42.3%) more than police (12.7%) or medical authorities (1.8%).
6. Police were more likely to know about several types of victimization:
  - a. Kidnapping (71.0% vs. 46.0%)
  - b. Neglect (36.9% vs. 29.2%)
  - c. Sexual abuse by a known adult (64.9% vs. 30.2%)
  - d. Sexual abuse by a non-specific adult (76.1% vs. 28.5%)
  - e. Witnessing of domestic violence (42.3% vs. 22.9%)
7. Sexual offenses were more likely to be known to school authorities when they occurred in school, involved a non-identified perpetrator, occurred to a child between 2-9 years of age, and involved a child living with a step-parent or unmarried partner of a parent
8. Sexual offenses were more likely to be known to the police when the child expressed feeling afraid
9. When these findings are compared to similar data collected in 1992 it appears that the reporting of incidents to authorities has increased, almost doubling for reporting on all victimizations, tripling for kidnapping, and also almost doubling for sexual abuse incidents.

National Children's Advocacy Center (2014). School, police, and medical authority involvement with children who have experienced victimization. Research to Practice Summary. Huntsville, AL: Author.

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