

Child Maltreatment and Links to Later Criminality

A Bibliography



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Scope

This bibliography provides citations and abstracts to articles, reports and books covering issues of child maltreatment and links to criminal behavior and incarceration. This bibliography is not comprehensive. International publications are included. Links to full text, unrestricted publications are provided when possible.

Organization

Entries are arranged in date descending order and alphabetically within each year of publication, 1989 to 2020.

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Berg, M. T., & Mulford, C. F. (2020). Reappraising and redirecting research on the victim–offender overlap. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 21*(1), 16-30.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838017735925>

The strong positive association between offending and victimization, or the victim–offender overlap, has received considerable amount of research attention in recent years. Empirical research has made important strides in unpacking the sources of the phenomenon, but important questions remain unanswered. Ambiguity surrounds the utility of certain theoretical explanations for the overlap, the nature of the phenomenon, and the methodological tools used to examine its etiology. Owing to these knowledge gaps, the scientific meaning of the victim–offender overlap is unclear. Moreover, a number of potentially important theoretical arguments are rarely subject to empirical testing in this line of research. The purpose of this article is to use a narrative review methodology to provide a critical reappraisal of the theoretical, empirical, and methodological research on the victim–offender overlap and offer directions for ways forward to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. This review includes critical analysis of 78 academic publications, along with a table that summarizes the key findings and conclusions from 18 critical empirical studies that have contributed to our understanding of the victim–offender overlap. We offer recommendations for the continued development of theoretical and methodological tools to better understand this complex phenomenon.

Miley, L. N., Fox, B., Muniz, C. N., Perkins, R., & DeLisi, M. (2020). Does childhood victimization predict specific adolescent offending? An analysis of generality versus specificity in the victim-offender overlap. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 101*.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.104328>

A large body of research has examined the relationship between victimization and future offending, with results suggesting that crime victims are at higher risk of future criminal behavior—known as the victim-offender overlap. Prior studies have primarily examined the relationship between general victimization (e.g., violent victimization, sexual abuse, and more) and general offending (e.g., violence, sexual offending, and drug use), and focused on adult populations. The goal of the present study is to expand on prior literature by examining if specific

forms of childhood victimization increase the risk of specific and analogous forms of offending among delinquent youth. Based upon a population of 64,329 high-risk youth offenders in Florida, this study evaluates the specificity of the overlap among youth who were physically abused, sexually abused, or witnessed illegal substance use at home during childhood to determine if these forms of victimization increased the risk of violence, sexual offending, and drug use, respectively, when assessed in multivariate logistic regression models. Results provide considerable support for specificity in the victim-offender overlap, as hypothesized. Specifically, experiencing physical abuse (OR = 1.55, $p < .001$), sexual abuse (OR = 3.58, $p < .001$) and witnessing household substance abuse (OR = 1.66, $p < .001$) in childhood each significantly and substantially increased the risk of analogous criminal behavior in adolescence, even when controlling for other risk factors and forms of victimization. This study provided novel evidence for specificity in the victim-offender overlap, even after controlling for confounding variables. Practical implications for early intervention and crime prevention are discussed, as well as implications for future research. Highlighting the importance of specificity in the victimization and adverse childhood experience (ACE) paradigms.

Drury, A. J., Elbert, M. J., & DeLisi, M. (2019). Childhood sexual abuse is significantly associated with subsequent sexual offending: new evidence among federal correctional clients. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 95. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.104035>

Adverse childhood experiences are associated with multiple negative behavioral outcomes and childhood sexual abuse (CSA) is particularly damaging. There is controversial evidence that CSA has a specialized effect on subsequent sexual offending. The current study tested the hypothesis that CSA is associated with sexual offending. Using a near-population of correctional clients on supervised release in the Midwestern United States, we examined the hypothesis with hierarchical negative binomial regression models. CSA was significantly associated with official charges for rape/sexual abuse despite controls for sex, race, age, arrest onset, total arrest charges, total adverse childhood experiences, Antisocial Personality Disorder, sexual sadism, and pedophilia. Age of onset of CSA was also inversely associated with sexual offending with effect sizes ranging between 2–5 standardized z-scores. The current study provides significant evidence that CSA is associated with later sexual offending even when accounting for powerful clinical and criminological covariates.

Edalati, H., & Nicholls, T. L. (2019). Childhood maltreatment and the risk for criminal justice involvement and victimization among homeless individuals: A systematic review. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 20*(3), 315-330. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838017708783>

Homeless individuals are at higher risk of criminal justice involvement (CJI) and victimization compared to their housed counterparts. Exposure to childhood maltreatment (CM; e.g., abuse, neglect) is one of the most significant predictors of CJI and victimization among homeless populations. The aim of this systematic review was to synthesize current knowledge regarding the relationship between CM and CJI and victimization among homeless individuals. Guided by the preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA) methods, a systematic search was performed using PsycINFO, MEDLINE, Embase, Web of Science, and the Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature for published studies investigating the relationship between CM and CJI and victimization among homeless samples. We identified 20 studies that met the inclusion criteria. Findings showed that across the majority of studies, CM, and in particular childhood physical (CPA) and sexual (CSA) abuse, is associated with increased risk of both CJI and victimization, regardless of various important factors (e.g., sociodemographic characteristics, psychiatric disorders, substance use). These findings support the need for prevention and treatment for “families at risk” (i.e., for intimate partner violence, child abuse and neglect) and also document the need for trauma-informed approaches within services for homeless individuals. Future research should focus on prospective designs that examine victimization and CJI in the same samples.

King, A. R., Kuhn, S. K., Strege, C., Russell, T. D., & Kolander, T. (2019). Revisiting the link between childhood sexual abuse and adult sexual aggression. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 94*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.104022>

Childhood maltreatment poses a risk factor for adult sexual aggression among men. Efforts were made to examine links between childhood sexual abuse (CSA) and sexual aggression after controlling variance associated with other forms of abuse. This sample was comprised of men (n = 489) who completed a national survey regarding their history of possible abuse and/or sexual aggression. Maltreatment indices included CSA, parental and sibling physical abuse, exposure to domestic violence, peer bullying, and family emotional abuse. Self-report indicators of sexual frotteurism, coercion and rape were provided by the Sexual Experiences Survey–Short Form Perpetration. CSA links with the criterion indicators were relatively stronger ($r = 0.36$, $d = 0.65$,

$p < .001$) than those found for non-sexual forms of abuse. CSA accounted for unshared variance in sexual aggression with these effects magnified by the addition of parental physical abuse ($d = 2.1$) or exposure to domestic violence ($d = 2.2$). The relative risks of prior acts of rape were elevated by CSA ($RR = 4.39, p < .001$), parental physical abuse ($RR = 3.85, p < 0.001$), exposure to domestic violence ($RR = 3.81, p < .001$), or sibling physical abuse ($RR = 2.56, p = 0.007$). These risks of completed rape were higher as well among respondents polyvictimized by two ($RR = 4.92, p < .001$) or more ($RR = 8.94, p < 0.001$) forms of abuse. Multiple forms of child maltreatment, particularly CSA, were strongly associated with adult sexual aggression in this sample of men from the general population.

Tisak, M. S., Tisak, J., Baker, E. R., & Graupensperger, S. A. (2019). [Relations among victimization, witnessing, and perpetration of aggression: impact of gender among youth offenders](https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260516659658). *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 34*(10). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260516659658>

The participants included 251 (158 males; 93 females) youth offenders who were arrested and incarcerated in a juvenile facility in the Midwest United States. The aims were to assess (a) how often they were a victim, a witness, and/or a perpetrator of social aggression, simple assault, and aggravated assault during the past year; (b) to examine whether exposure (either witness or victim or both) predicted committing three types of aggressive behaviors; and (c) to assess the impact of gender among the youth offenders. Differential predictability models were utilized to assess gender differences. The findings revealed that gender was an important predictor. For example, females reported higher rates of being a witness, a victim, and a perpetrator of social aggression than did males. Moreover, female offenders committed simple assault more often than males and males committed aggravated assault more often than females. The general results suggest that it is important to examine the various forms of aggression, and exposure, as well as how gender affects these relationships.

Davis, K. C., Masters, N. T., Casey, E., Kajumulo, K. F., Norris, J., & George, W. H. (2018). [How childhood maltreatment profiles of male victims predict adult perpetration and psychosocial functioning](https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260515613345). *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 33(6), 915-937. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260515613345>

This study used latent class analysis to empirically identify subgroups of men based on their exposure to childhood maltreatment (i.e., emotional neglect and abuse, physical neglect and abuse, and sexual abuse). It then examined subgroups' differential perpetration of adult intimate partner violence (IPV; both psychological and physical), violence against peers, and sexual assault. Finally, we compared sociodemographic variables and psychosocial functioning across profiles to characterize the adult experiences of men in different maltreatment groups. The community sample consisted of 626 heterosexually active 21- to 30-year-old men. We identified four subgroups: Low Maltreatment (80% of the sample), Emotional and Physical Maltreatment (12%), Emotional and Sexual Maltreatment (4%), and Poly-Victimized (4%). The Low Maltreatment group had significantly lower IPV perpetration rates than the Emotional and Physical Maltreatment group, but groups did not significantly differ on peer violence or sexual assault perpetration rates. Overall, Poly-Victimized men were significantly worse off than the Low Maltreatment group regarding income, education level, and incarceration history. Their rates of recent anxiety and depression symptoms were also higher than those of Low Maltreatment men. Findings support the use of person-oriented techniques for deriving patterns of childhood maltreatment and how these patterns relate to psychological, behavioral, and social factors in adulthood.

Papalia, N., Ogloff, J. R., Cutajar, M., & Mullen, P. E. (2018). Child sexual abuse and criminal offending: Gender-specific effects and the role of abuse characteristics and other adverse outcomes. *Child Maltreatment*, 23(4), 399-416. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077559518785779>

This study sought to enhance knowledge of the link between child sexual abuse (CSA) and long-term criminality by investigating gender-specific effects and the role of index sexual abuse characteristics, revictimization, and serious mental health problems. An Australian sample of 2,759 documented cases of sexual abuse and 2,677 community controls were linked to statewide police records and public mental health service databases, with a follow-up period of 13–44 years. Four key findings emerged from the analysis: (1) CSA victims were more likely than controls to engage in all types of criminal behaviors including violent, sexual, and other offending; (2) gender

moderated the relationship between CSA and criminal offending, with stronger associations found among females for general and violent offending, and among males for sexual offending; (3) certain features of the index sexual abuse (i.e., developmental period, number of perpetrators, relation to perpetrator), further victimization experiences, and the development of serious mental health problems were all associated with an increased likelihood of criminal behavior among CSA victims; (4) CSA victims who engaged in criminal offending were more likely to present with cumulative risks than victims not engaging in criminal offending. Implications for future research and clinical practice are discussed.

De Jong, R., & Dennison, S. (2017). Recorded offending among child sexual abuse victims: A 30-year follow-up. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 72*, 75-84.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.07.013>

In this paper we employed a prospective design to examine the effect of child sexual abuse (CSA) on life-course offending by comparing victims to both their siblings and random controls in the Netherlands. Information on victimization was gathered from court files and on offending from official criminal records. We found that victims of CSA were more at risk of offending than random controls, but so were their siblings. Only female victims were more likely to offend than their own siblings. The increased risk for offending was not specifically found for sexual offenses, instead it was found for various types of offenses. The found difference between female victims and siblings held true for abuse perpetrated by someone outside the family. We therefore conclude that family and environmental factors are the most important to explain offending among male CSA victims, while these factors alone are not enough to explain the effect of CSA on offending for females.

McKibbin, G., Humphreys, C., & Hamilton, B. (2017). “Talking about child sexual abuse would have helped me”: Young people who sexually abused reflect on preventing harmful sexual behavior. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 70*, 210-221.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.06.017>

Harmful sexual behavior carried out by children and young people accounts for about half of all child sexual abuse perpetration. The aim of this study was to draw on the insights of young people who had been sexually abusive to enhance the current prevention agenda. The study involved semi-structured interviews with 14 young people and six treatment-providing workers. Sampling was

purposive and the young people had previously completed a treatment program for harmful sexual behaviour in Victoria, Australia. The young people were approached as experts based on their previous experience of engaging in harmful sexual behavior. At the same time, their past abusive behavior was not condoned or minimised. Constructivist Grounded Theory was used to analyse the qualitative data. Opportunities for preventing harmful sexual behavior were the focus of the interviews with young people and workers. The research identified three opportunities for prevention, which involved acting on behalf of children and young people to: reform their sexuality education; redress their victimization experiences; and help their management of pornography. These opportunities could inform the design of initiatives to enhance the prevention agenda.

Papalia, N. L., Luebbers, S., Ogloff, J. R., Cutajar, M., & Mullen, P. E. (2017). Exploring the longitudinal offending pathways of child sexual abuse victims: A preliminary analysis using latent variable modeling. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 66, 84-100.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.01.005>

Very little research has been conducted to show the way in which criminal behavior unfolds over the life-course in children who have been sexually abused, and whether it differs from the ‘age-crime’ patterns consistently documented in the criminology literature. This study investigated the temporal pathways of criminal offending between the ages of 10–25 years among medically confirmed cases of child sexual abuse (CSA), and considered whether abuse variables, offense variables, and the presence of other adverse outcomes, were associated with heterogeneity in offending pathways among CSA survivors. This study utilized data gathered as part of a large-scale study involving the linkage of forensic examinations on 2759 cases of medically ascertained CSA between 1964 and 1995, to criminal justice and public psychiatric databases 13–44 years following abuse, together with a matched comparison sample of 2677 individuals. We used the subsample of 283 offending individuals (191 victims; 92 comparisons) for whom complete offending data were available. We compared the aggregate age-crime curves for CSA victims and comparisons, and applied longitudinal latent class analysis to identify distinct subgroups of offending pathways between ages 10–25 years within the abuse sample. Four latent pathways emerged among sexually abused offenders, labeled: Early-Onset/High-Risk/Adolescence-Limited; Intermediate-Onset/Low-Risk/Adolescence-Limited; Late-Onset/Low-Risk/Slow-Declining; and Early-Onset/High-Risk/Persistent offenders. Age at abuse, the nature and frequency of offending, and mental health problems, were associated with the offending pathway

followed by CSA victims. Consistent with criminological literature, findings indicate considerable heterogeneity in the longitudinal offending patterns of offenders exposed to CSA. Implications for clinical practice and directions for research are highlighted.

Van Wert, M., Mishna, F., Trocme, N., & Fallon, B. (2017). Which maltreated children are at greatest risk of aggressive and criminal behavior? An examination of maltreatment dimensions and cumulative risk. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 69, 49-61.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.04.013>

This paper explores the well-documented relationship between child maltreatment and aggressive and criminal behavior, specifically examining several dimensions of maltreatment and cumulative child and family risk. Using data from the provincially representative Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (OIS-2013), this paper utilizes a developmental lens to examine whether maltreatment dimensions and cumulative risk can differentiate maltreated young people who exhibit aggressive and criminal behaviors and those who do not. A total unweighted sample of 1837 substantiated maltreatment investigations was examined in this analysis using chi-square, t-test, and logistic regression. The findings indicate that 13% of maltreated children and youth served by the Ontario child welfare system exhibited aggression and 6% of maltreated adolescents were involved in the youth justice system. Aggressive children and youth were more likely to experience severe and co-occurring forms of maltreatment and to experience higher levels of cumulative child risk. In adolescence, youth exhibiting aggressive and/or criminal behavior commonly were investigated because of neglect, specifically because their caregivers were no longer willing or able to remain in a caregiving role. Implications for child welfare policy and practice are discussed.

Levenson, J. S., & Grady, M. D. (2016). The influence of childhood trauma on sexual violence and sexual deviance in adulthood. *Traumatology*, 22(2), 94.

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of various types of childhood adversity on later sexual deviance and sexually violent behavior. Data were collected from more than 700 convicted sexual offenders in outpatient and confinement-based treatment programs throughout the U.S. Using the 10-item Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Scale, participants were surveyed about childhood maltreatment and family dysfunction. For male sex offenders, factors

that significantly predicted sexual deviance included childhood sexual abuse, emotional neglect, and having unmarried parents. Factors that significantly predicted violent sexual offending included child physical abuse, substance abuse in the childhood home, mental illness in the home, and having an incarcerated family member. ACE scores were significantly higher for generalist offenders than for those specializing in sexual crime. The results underscore the need for clinicians to assess the existence of early adversity, to understand the role of traumatic events in the development of criminality and abusive behaviors, and to utilize trauma-informed counseling practices. In terms of policy, investing in prevention services for maltreated children and at-risk families is an important step in disrupting the cycle of interpersonal violence and crime in our communities.

Malvaso, C. G., Delfabbro, P. H., & Day, A. (2016). Risk factors that influence the maltreatment-offending association: A systematic review of prospective and longitudinal studies. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 31*, 1-15.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2016.06.006>

The association between exposure to maltreatment during childhood or adolescence and subsequent delinquent or offending behaviors has been repeatedly documented in the scientific literature. Despite this, the nature of this relationship remains unclear and, in particular, whether problematic behavior arises directly as a result of the maltreatment, other co-existing risk factors or an interaction between maltreatment and these risk factors. This systematic review aims to organize evidence on this topic in relation to an ecological perspective that encompasses the multifaceted nature of the maltreatment-offending association. A final pool of 62 studies were included in the qualitative synthesis. Results and discussion are organized according to four main sections: taxonomic categories of maltreatment (e.g., the type or timing of abuse, as well as how welfare involvement or placement in out-of-home care influences outcomes), individual risk factors (e.g., emotional and behavioral problems), social risk factors (e.g., characteristics of the family, parents and peers), and contextual risk factors (e.g., neighborhood characteristics). As consistent with ecological theory, a multitude of factors contribute to the maltreatment offending association. The application of a conceptual framework to guide future research and treatment is discussed.

Plummer, M., & Cossins, A. (2016). The cycle of abuse: When victims become offenders. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 19*(3), 286-304.

Various psychological theories exist in the literature to explain the behavior of men who commit child sex offences, including the belief that child sexual abuse (CSA) is a predisposing factor for the transition from victim to offender. These theories are, however, unable to explain the fact that while most victims of CSA are female, most perpetrators of CSA are male. The sex specificity of CSA in terms of victims and offenders suggests that the experience of CSA and its psychosocial effects may be different for boys, compared to girls. We hypothesize that CSA experiences may involve risk factors that affect the development of sexually abusive behavior for boys, rather than girls. Our aim was to determine whether the literature provides evidence of a cycle of abuse from victim to offender, and, if so, to document its characteristics. We undertook a comprehensive literature review of studies on both victims and offenders, including studies which revealed the following: age of onset of CSA, duration of abuse, gender of the abuser, the relationship between victim and abuser, grooming behaviors, the types and severity of abuse, and disclosure of abuse. While we found no evidence for the existence of a cycle of abuse for female CSA victims, we discovered evidence to support the existence of a cycle of abuse for male CSA victims who had experienced particular abuse characteristics. As an original contribution to the literature, we identified four factors that may be associated with a boy's transition from victim to offender as well as the methodological issues to be addressed in future research. Based on criminological theories, we argue that these four factors share a common theme, that is, that they represent experiences of power (for the abuser) and powerlessness (for the victim).

Malvaso, C. G., Delfabbro, P., & Day, A. (2015). The maltreatment–offending association: A systematic review of the methodological features of prospective and longitudinal studies. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 19*(1), 20-34.

Although the association between childhood maltreatment and the subsequent development of offending behavior is well documented, the association does not necessarily reflect a causal relationship. This paper provides a systematic review of prospective and longitudinal studies using official records of maltreatment to gain insights into the extent to which methodological variations are likely to influence the conclusions drawn about the likely relationship between maltreatment and offending. Sixty-two original studies met the inclusion criteria. These studies were assessed

according to a set of seven methodological criteria: (1) inclusion of comparison groups, (2) the use of statistical controls, (3) valid outcome measures, (4) operationalization of maltreatment, (5) proper temporal order of associations, (6) data relating to unsubstantiated maltreatment, and (7) consideration of mediating and moderating factors. The strength of evidence in support of the maltreatment–offending association was influenced by a number of methodological factors. Despite the increasing sophistication of studies, there is a need to be mindful of how these factors are taken into account in future research in order to gain a deeper understanding of the adverse consequences of maltreatment and how this might influence outcomes and inform interventions.

Cuadra, L. E., Jaffe, A. E., Thomas, R., & DiLillo, D. (2014). Child maltreatment and adult criminal behavior: Does criminal thinking explain the association?. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 38(8), 1399-1408.

Criminal thinking styles were examined as mediational links between different forms of child maltreatment (i.e., sexual abuse, physical abuse, and physical neglect) and adult criminal behaviors in 338 recently adjudicated men. Analyses revealed positive associations between child sexual abuse and sexual offenses as an adult, and between child physical abuse/neglect and endorsing proactive and reactive criminal thinking styles. Mediation analyses showed that associations between overall maltreatment history and adult criminal behaviors were accounted for by general criminal thinking styles and both proactive and reactive criminal thinking. These findings suggest a potential psychological pathway to criminal behavior associated with child maltreatment. Limitations of the study as well as research and clinical implications of the results are discussed.
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Watts, S. J., & McNulty, T. L. (2013). Childhood abuse and criminal behavior: Testing a General Strain Theory model. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 28(15), 3023-3040.

This article draws on general strain theory (GST) to develop and test a model of the childhood abuse–crime relationship. Using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health),¹ we find that early childhood physical and sexual abuse are robust predictors of offending in adolescence, for the full sample and in equations disaggregated by gender. GST is partially supported in that the effects of childhood physical abuse on offending for both females and males are mediated by an index of depression symptoms, whereas the effect of sexual abuse

among females appears to be mediated largely by closeness to mother. The effect of childhood sexual abuse among males, however, is more robust than among females and it persists despite controls for low self-control, ties to delinquent peers, school attachment, and closeness to mother. Theoretical implications of the findings are discussed.

Widom, C. S., Czaja, S., Wilson, H. W., Allwood, M., & Chauhan, P. (2013). Do the long-term consequences of neglect differ for children of different races and ethnic backgrounds?. *Child Maltreatment, 18*(1), 42-55.

Scant research has examined how children of different races or ethnic backgrounds manifest consequences of neglect. We examined multiple domains of functioning (academic/intellectual, social/behavioral, and psychiatric), three theories (racial invariance, double jeopardy, and resilience), and potential confounding variables. Children with documented cases of neglect (ages 0–11) and matched controls without such histories were followed up and interviewed in adulthood (N = 1,039). The sample was 47.3% female, 62.4% White, 34.3% Black, and 3.4% Hispanic. Black and White neglected children showed negative consequences for IQ, reading ability, and occupational status compared to controls. Compared to same race and ethnic group controls, neglected White children showed extensive mental health consequences, Black children showed more anxiety and dysthymia, and Hispanic children showed increased risk for alcohol problems. Black and White neglected children differed in risk for violence compared to same race controls: Neglected Black children were arrested for violence two times more often than Black controls, whereas neglected White children were more likely than White controls to report engaging in violence. Findings provide some support for each theory (racial invariance, double jeopardy, and resilience). Understanding the factors that account for similarities and differences in consequences requires further investigation. Implications for research and policy are discussed.

Mersky, J. P., Topitzes, J., & Reynolds, A. J. (2012). Unsafe at any age linking childhood and adolescent maltreatment to delinquency and crime. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, 49*(2), 295-318.

This study compares the effects of childhood maltreatment and adolescent maltreatment on delinquency and crime, including violent and nonviolent offending. Data were derived from the Chicago Longitudinal Study, a prospective investigation of 1,539 underprivileged, minority

subjects. Results confirmed that rates of overall delinquency, along with violent, drug, and property offending specifically, were elevated among childhood and adolescent maltreatment victims compared to their nonmaltreated peers. Childhood maltreatment was associated with delinquency independent of adolescent maltreatment, and strong connections between adolescent maltreatment and delinquency were present independent of prior victimization. Childhood maltreatment was also significantly related to a panel of adult crime measures, while the effects of adolescent maltreatment on adult crime were less robust. The study findings suggest that maltreatment at any age increases the risk of future offending, implying that investments in prevention and intervention strategies throughout childhood and adolescence may reduce delinquency and crime.

Morrissey, M. B., Courtney, D., & Maschi, T. (2012). [Sexual abuse histories among incarcerated older adult offenders: A descriptive study](#). In E. A. Kalfoglou & R. Faikoğlu (Eds.), *Sexual Abuse - Breaking the Silence* (pp. 21-30). InTech.

Topitzes, J., Mersky, J. P., & Reynolds, A. J. (2012). From child maltreatment to violent offending: An examination of mixed-gender and gender-specific models. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 27(12), 2322-2347.

Research suggests that child maltreatment predicts juvenile violence, but it is uncertain whether the effects of victimization persist into adulthood or differ across gender. Furthermore, we know little about the mechanisms underlying the victim–perpetrator cycle for males and females. Consequently, this study analyzed associations between child maltreatment and a number of adult measures of violent offending within mixed-gender and gender-specific models. Along with main effects, the study directly tested the moderating effects of gender on the maltreatment–violence link and analyzed theory informed gender-specific mediators. Data were derived from the Chicago Longitudinal Study, a panel investigation of 1,539 low-income minority participants born in 1979 or 1980. Child welfare, juvenile court, and criminal court records informed the study’s explanatory and outcome measures. Prospectively collected covariate and mediator measures originated with parent, teacher, and self-reports along with several administrative sources. Results indicated that child maltreatment, ages 0 to 11, significantly predicted all study indicators of violence in the full sample and most study outcomes in the male and female subsamples. In no instance did gender moderate the maltreatment–violence association. Late childhood/early adolescence environmental

instability, childhood externalizing behaviors, and adolescent peer social skills fully mediated the maltreatment–violence nexus among males. Adolescent externalizing behavior partially mediated the relationship of interest among females. Evidence also indicated that internalizing processes protected females who had been maltreated in childhood against perpetrating violence later in life. Implications of results are discussed.

Yun, I., Ball, J. D., & Lim, H. (2011). Disentangling the relationship between child maltreatment and violent delinquency: Using a nationally representative sample. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 26*(1), 88-110.

This study uses the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescents (Add Health) data, a nationally representative sample of adolescents, to disentangle the relationship between child maltreatment and violent delinquency. Also examined are potential moderating effects of gender, socioeconomic status (SES), and religiosity on the association between child maltreatment and violent delinquency. Contrary to prior research findings, the current analyses reveal that physical abuse is not associated with future violent delinquency, whereas sexual abuse and neglect predict violent delinquency significantly. The current study also did not reveal any moderating effects of gender, SES, and religiosity on the association between maltreatment and violent delinquency. Interpretations of these findings are presented, drawing on the properties of the national probability sample compared to the findings of most prior studies that used localized samples.

Duke, N. N., Pettingell, S. L., McMorris, B. J., & Borowsky, I. W. (2010). [Adolescent violence perpetration: Associations with multiple types of adverse childhood experiences.](#) *Pediatrics, 125*(4), e778-e786.

Adverse childhood experiences are associated with significant functional impairment and life lost in adolescence and adulthood. This study identified relationships between multiple types of adverse events and distinct categories of adolescent violence perpetration. Data are from 136 549 students in the 6th, 9th, and 12th grades who responded to the 2007 Minnesota Student Survey, an anonymous, self-report survey examining youth health behaviors and perceptions, characteristics of primary socializing domains, and youth engagement. Linear and logistic regression models were used to determine if 6 types of adverse experiences including physical abuse, sexual abuse by family and/or other persons, witnessing abuse, and household dysfunction caused by family

alcohol and/or drug use were significantly associated with risk of adolescent violence perpetration after adjustment for demographic covariates. An adverse-events score was entered into regression models to test for a dose-response relationship between the event score and violence outcomes. All analyses were stratified according to gender. More than 1 in 4 youth (28.9%) reported at least 1 adverse childhood experience. The most commonly reported adverse experience was alcohol abuse by a household family member that caused problems. Each type of adverse childhood experience was significantly associated with adolescent interpersonal violence perpetration (delinquency, bullying, physical fighting, dating violence, weapon-carrying on school property) and self-directed violence (self-mutilatory behavior, suicidal ideation, and suicide attempt). For each additional type of adverse event reported by youth, the risk of violence perpetration increased 35% to 144%. Multiple types of adverse childhood experiences should be considered as risk factors for a spectrum of violence-related outcomes during adolescence. Providers and advocates should be aware of the interrelatedness and cumulative impact of adverse-event types. Study findings support broadening the current discourse on types of adverse events when considering pathways from child maltreatment to adolescent perpetration of delinquent and violent outcomes.

Nikulina, V., Widom, C. S., & Czaja, S. (2010). The role of childhood neglect and childhood poverty in predicting mental health, academic achievement and crime in adulthood. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 48(3-4), 309-321.

This study examines the roles of childhood neglect and childhood poverty (family and neighborhood) in predicting Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Major Depressive Disorder (MDD), academic achievement, and crime in young adulthood. Using existing data from a prospective cohort design study, 1,005 children with documented histories of neglect (N = 507) and matched controls (N = 497) were interviewed in young adulthood (mean age 29). Official criminal histories were also used to assess outcomes. Data were analyzed using logistic and ordinary least squares regressions and hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) to control for neighborhood clustering. Results from HLM revealed that childhood neglect and childhood family poverty uniquely predicted PTSD and adult arrest, MDD was predicted only by childhood family poverty, and a significant interaction between childhood family poverty and childhood neighborhood poverty predicted academic achievement for the control group only. Childhood neglect, childhood family poverty, and childhood neighborhood poverty each contribute to poor

outcomes later in life. While interventions should be developed for neglected children to prevent negative outcomes, the current findings suggest that it is also important to consider the ecological context in which these children are growing up.

Williams, J. H., Van Dorn, R. A., Bright, C. L., Jonson-Reid, M., & Nebbitt, V. E. (2010). [Child maltreatment and delinquency onset among African American adolescent males.](#) *Research on Social Work Practice*, 20(3), 253-259.

Child welfare and criminology research have increasingly sought to better understand factors that increase the likelihood that abused and neglected children will become involved in the juvenile justice system. However, few studies have addressed this relationship among African American male adolescents. The current study examines the relationship between child maltreatment (i.e., neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and other/mixed abuse) and the likelihood of a delinquency petition using a sample of African American males ($N = 2,335$) born before 1990. Multivariable logistic regression models compared those with a delinquency-based juvenile justice petition to those without. Results indicate that African American males with a history of neglect, physical abuse, or other/mixed abuse were more likely to be involved in the juvenile justice system than those without any child maltreatment. Additionally, multiple maltreatment reports, a prior history of mental health treatment, victimization, and having a parent who did not complete high school also increased the likelihood of a delinquency petition. Implications for intervention and prevention are discussed.

DeGue, S., & Widom, C. S. (2009). Does out-of-home placement mediate the relationship between child maltreatment and adult criminality?. *Child Maltreatment*, 14(4), 344-355.

Existing research on child welfare interventions as mediators of the criminal consequences of child maltreatment has focused on juvenile delinquency rather than adult criminality. This study uses a prospective sample of 772 maltreated youth to examine out-of-home placement as a mediator of adult criminality. Arrest data were collected from official records when the full sample was a mean age of 31.8, having ample opportunity for involvement with the criminal justice system. Overall, out-of-home placement showed a neutral or slightly positive effect on adult criminality compared to no placement, consistent with earlier findings. However, prior delinquency and placement instability were significant risk factors for adult criminality. Gender, not race, was identified as a

significant moderator of the relationship between placement and adult criminality, with different patterns of response to placement for males and females. Thus, whether placement experiences influence adult criminal consequences of child maltreatment might depend on prior delinquency, placement stability, and gender.

Gilbert, R., Widom, C. S., Browne, K., Fergusson, D., Webb, E., & Janson, S. (2009). Burden and consequences of child maltreatment in high-income countries. *The Lancet*, 373(9657), 68-81.

Child maltreatment remains a major public-health and social-welfare problem in high-income countries. Every year, about 4-16% of children are physically abused and one in ten is neglected or psychologically abused. During childhood, between 5% and 10% of girls and up to 5% of boys are exposed to penetrative sexual abuse, and up to three times this number are exposed to any type of sexual abuse. However, official rates for substantiated child maltreatment indicate less than a tenth of this burden. Exposure to multiple types and repeated episodes of maltreatment is associated with increased risks of severe maltreatment and psychological consequences. Child maltreatment substantially contributes to child mortality and morbidity and has longlasting effects on mental health, drug and alcohol misuse (especially in girls), risky sexual behaviour, obesity, and criminal behaviour, which persist into adulthood. Neglect is at least as damaging as physical or sexual abuse in the long term but has received the least scientific and public attention. The high burden and serious and long-term consequences of child maltreatment warrant increased investment in preventive and therapeutic strategies from early childhood.

Maas, C., Herrenkohl, T. I., & Sousa, C. (2008). Review of research on child maltreatment and violence in youth. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 9(1), 56-67.

This review addresses research regarding associations between child maltreatment and youth violence perpetration. The authors explore current findings on the direct effects of child maltreatment on later youth violence and possible gender and ethnic differences. They examine differences in the prediction of adolescent violence as a function of duration and timing of maltreatment. Results provide compelling evidence linking child maltreatment and later youth violence, although some research is inconclusive once demographics and other competing predictors are considered. Overall, physical abuse is perhaps the most consistent predictor of youth

violence, patterned by an increased risk for children exposed to severe, compounded maltreatment. However, findings indicate that lesser severe forms of abuse can increase the risk of later violence for some youth. Limitations of current research include relatively few prospective, studies on the abuse-violence link; a general lack of specificity in definitions of key variables; and inconsistency in data analysis methods.

McDaniels Wilson, C., & Belknap, J. (2008). The extensive sexual violation and sexual abuse histories of incarcerated women. *Violence Against Women, 14*(10), 1090-1127.

A growing body of research reports on the lifetime prevalence of sexual victimization experiences among incarcerated women. However, none of this research provides a detailed account of the many types and levels of sexual violations and sexual abuses, the age of occurrence, and the victim–offender relationship. This study used the Sexual Abuse Checklist (designed by the first author) and a modified version of the Sexual Experiences Survey (SES) to obtain a detailed account of 391 incarcerated women's self-reported sexual violation and abuse histories. Seventy percent of the women reported at least one violation consistent with what qualifies as “rape” in most states in the United States today, and half of the women reported child sexual abuse victimization. The most prevalent victim–offender relationships were male strangers, male lovers or boyfriends, male dates, husbands, uncles, brothers, male cousins, and stepfathers.

Teague, R., Mazerolle, P., Legosz, M., & Sanderson, J. (2008). Linking childhood exposure to physical abuse and adult offending: Examining mediating factors and gendered relationships. *Justice Quarterly, 25*(2), 313-348.

This article examines relationships between physical abuse and official and self-reported offending among 480 male and female offenders serving community corrections orders in Queensland, Australia. It examines whether offending rates vary between abused and non-abused respondents and whether the abuse–offending relationship is maintained in the presence of demographic and juvenile offending variables. The study explores whether family and school factors can mediate the abuse–offending relationship. The results reveal that physically abused offenders reported higher rates of violent, property, and total offending than non-abused offenders. The effects of abuse on violent and property crime were reduced with the introduction of demographic and juvenile offending variables, but an overall effect of physical

abuse remained for total offending. Maternal support was associated with lower levels of adult offending among physically abused respondents, while school expulsion and attachment to school for non-conventional reasons (e.g., non-academic) appeared to exacerbate the abuse-offending relationship.

Dembo, R., Schmeidler, J., & Childs, K. (2007). Correlates of male and female juvenile offender abuse experiences. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 16*(3), 75-94.

This paper reports the results of developing and evaluating a classification of 315 arrested youth processed at the Hillsborough County Juvenile Assessment Center from September 1, 1994 to January 31, 1998. Youth were characterized as physically or sexually abused if they reported abuse or if they had been referred to juvenile court for abuse. Stepwise logistic regression analysis revealed that family problems, friends' substance use, and delinquency involvement (marginally significantly related) were associated with both physical abuse and sexual victimization. In addition, physical abuse was associated with psychological problems and sexual victimization with being female, being older, and own substance use. The research implications of these results are discussed.

Lansford, J. E., Miller-Johnson, S., Berlin, L. J., Dodge, K. A., Bates, J. E., & Pettit, G. S. (2007). Early physical abuse and later violent delinquency: A prospective longitudinal study. *Child Maltreatment, 12*(3), 233-245.

In this prospective longitudinal study of 574 children followed from age 5 to age 21, the authors examine the links between early physical abuse and violent delinquency and other socially relevant outcomes during late adolescence or early adulthood and the extent to which the child's race and gender moderate these links. Analyses of covariance indicated that individuals who had been physically abused in the first 5 years of life were at greater risk for being arrested as juveniles for violent, nonviolent, and status offenses. Moreover, physically abused youth were less likely to have graduated from high school and more likely to have been fired in the past year, to have been a teen parent, and to have been pregnant or impregnated someone in the past year while not married. These effects were more pronounced for African American than for European American youth and somewhat more pronounced for females than for males.

Lisak, D., & Beszterczey, S. (2007). The cycle of violence: The life histories of 43 death row inmates. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, 8(2), 118-128.

The life histories of 43 men on death row were examined in a qualitative analysis of the multiple intermediary factors in the cycle of violence. Severe and multiple forms of abuse were endemic in this sample of men. Abuse was typically multigenerational and almost universally linked to intergenerational substance abuse. After experiencing abuse, the majority of these men manifested extensive developmental problems, from severe difficulties in school to chronic relationship and occupational problems. For most, the transition to adulthood was seriously compromised. Results are discussed in terms of the interaction between developmental trauma and masculine socialization.

Makarios, M. D. (2007). Race, abuse, and female criminal violence. *Feminist Criminology*, 2(2), 100-116.

Gender-specific research on the relationship between childhood abuse and delinquency in females is an important emerging topic in criminology. Feminist criminologists have pointed toward childhood abuse as a key turning point in young girls' lives that leads toward delinquency but have yet to empirically address how this relationship varies along racial lines. This study uses prospective cohort data to test for interactions among child abuse, race, and violent criminal arrest in females. In doing so, it addresses the differences in the effects of abuse across gender and across race in females. Results provide some support for feminist literature finding that although all abused children were more likely to be later arrested for a violent offense, the effects were significantly stronger for abused girls than boys. Still, race and gender interactions reveal no racial differences in the effects of abuse on females.

Mersky, J. P., & Reynolds, A. J. (2007). Child maltreatment and violent delinquency: Disentangling main effects and subgroup effects. *Child Maltreatment*, 12(3), 246-258.

This study employs data from the Chicago Longitudinal Study (CLS) to investigate the relation between child maltreatment and the incidence and frequency of violent delinquency. The authors also examine if effects vary between physically abused and neglected children and if select indicators (sex, cumulative risk, public aid receipt) moderate the connections between maltreatment and violent outcomes. The CLS follows a cohort of 1,539 low-income, minority

children who attended public kindergarten programs in 1985-1986. The primary sample includes 1,404 participants for whom maltreatment and delinquency status were verified. Maltreatment is significantly associated with all violent outcomes investigated. Effects are comparable for physically abused and neglected children. Results indicate that public assistance, particularly persistent receipt, moderates the association between maltreatment and multiple outcomes. Findings support the hypothesized connection between maltreatment and violent delinquency while highlighting certain subgroups that may be at elevated risk. Implications for research design and program development are discussed.

Johnson, R. J., Ross, M. W., Taylor, W. C., Williams, M. L., Carvajal, R. I., & Peters, R. J. (2006). Prevalence of childhood sexual abuse among incarcerated males in county jail. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 30(1), 75-86.

The current study examined the prevalence and characteristics of childhood sexual abuse in a jailed-based population. A retrospective, self-reported survey was administered over an 8-week period to a random sample of 100 men who were incarcerated in a county jail in Southeastern Texas. The survey included questions about childhood sexual experiences before and after puberty, drug history and use, and sexual risk-taking behaviors. Of the 100 male inmates who participated in this study, 59% reported experiencing some form of sexual abuse before puberty, and all such instances occurred before or at the age of 13 years. The first episode of childhood sexual abuse began at an average age of 9.6 years ($SD = 2.4$), and ended at an average age of 13.0 years ($SD = 2.3$). Kissing and touching without intercourse (64%) was the common pattern of sexual abuse experience reported. The total number of perpetrators was 165, with 10% male and 90% female. Friends ($n = 72$) and family ($n = 56$) were the most frequent perpetrators. Childhood sexual abuse may be more prevalent among inmates than among males in the general population. These results show a high percentage of inmates who report a history of childhood sexual abuse; this rate is higher than those reported by other studies for incarcerated males. The findings support the belief held by professionals in the criminal justice field that a significant number of incarcerated males may have been victims of sexual abuse.

Pollock, J. M., Mullings, J. L., & Crouch, B. M. (2006). Violent women: Findings from the Texas Women Inmates Study. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 21*(4), 485-502.

Prior research on violent crime by female offenders is reviewed. A Texas female prisoner sample is used to explore specific questions raised by the literature review. Violent and nonviolent offenders were compared, looking specifically at race, socioeconomic status, having been raised in single-parent homes, criminal history, gang membership, marital status, and childhood abuse. Findings indicated that women who are violent were more likely to be younger, African American, unemployed, and having extensive criminal histories. They were more likely to come from dysfunctional families with childhood abuse. Limitations of the study were noted.

Fagan, A. A. (2005). The relationship between adolescent physical abuse and criminal offending: Support for an enduring and generalized cycle of violence. *Journal of Family Violence, 20*(5), 279-290.

Prospective investigations have demonstrated support for the cycle of violence theory. However, few studies have examined whether or not abuse occurring during adolescence increases the prevalence and frequency of criminal involvement, or explored the long-term consequences of such victimization. In addition, there has been little investigation of whether or not the effects of abuse vary depending on characteristics of the victim, such as sex, race/ethnicity, age, family structure or income. Using data from the National Youth Survey, this study demonstrates that adolescent physical abuse has immediate and enduring effects on the prevalence and frequency of a variety of self-reported offenses, including violent and non-violent crimes, drug use and intimate partner violence. Furthermore, the study reveals that while victimization increases the prevalence of offending for victims of varying backgrounds, the frequency of offending is moderated by family income, area of residence, and family structure. Implications for prevention are discussed.

Grella, C. E., Stein, J. A., & Greenwell, L. (2005). Associations among childhood trauma, adolescent problem behaviors, and adverse adult outcomes in substance-abusing women offenders. *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors, 19*(1), 43-53.

This article explores relationships among exposure to childhood abuse and traumatic events, adolescent conduct problems and substance abuse, and adult psychological distress and criminal behaviors in a sample of substance-abusing women offenders (N = 440). Latent variable structural equation models revealed direct relationships between several childhood traumatic events and

greater adolescent conduct problems and substance abuse. Conduct problems predicted more adult criminal behavior, and adolescent substance abuse predicted higher levels of current psychological distress. There were direct relationships between several types of traumatic events and current psychological distress and between traumatic events and specific criminal behaviors. Ethnic differences were also found, suggesting different pathways to criminal behavior. The findings underscore the need to provide trauma-related services for substance-abusing women offenders. (PsycINFO Database Record © 2012 APA, all rights reserved).

Smith, C. A., Ireland, T. O., & Thornberry, T. P. (2005). Adolescent maltreatment and its impact on young adult antisocial behavior. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 29(10), 1099-1119.

Childhood maltreatment is known to be a risk factor for a range of later problems, but much less is known about adolescent maltreatment. The present study aims to investigate the impact of adolescent maltreatment on antisocial behavior, while controlling for prior levels of problem behavior as well as sociodemographic characteristics. Data are from the Rochester Youth Development Study, a cohort study of the development of problem behaviors in a sample of 1,000 urban youth followed from age 13 into adulthood. Subjects include 68% African American, 17% Hispanic, and 15% White youth. This analysis includes a maximum of 884 subjects, of whom 9.3% had substantiated maltreatment reports in adolescence. Among the maltreated adolescents, 14 experienced sex abuse, 36 experienced physical abuse, and 32 were neglected or emotionally abused. Outcomes explored in late adolescence (ages 16-18) and young adulthood (ages 20-22) include arrest, self-reported general and violent offending, and illicit drug use. Control variables include prior levels of these outcomes as well as sociodemographic characteristics like poverty, parent education, and caregiver changes. Logistic regression analysis determined that experiencing any substantiated maltreatment during adolescence increases the odds of arrest, general and violent offending, and illicit drug use in young adulthood, even controlling for sociodemographic characteristics and prior levels of problem behavior. Different types of adolescent maltreatment, including neglect, appear to produce similar adverse behavioral consequences. Adolescent maltreatment necessitates increased attention in view of its enduring and potentially wide-ranging impact on the life span.

Siegel, J. A., & Williams, L. M. (2003). The relationship between child sexual abuse and female delinquency and crime: A prospective study. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 40(1), 71-94.

Child sexual abuse has been hypothesized to be an especially significant factor in the etiology of girls' delinquency and women's crime. This article reports on a prospective study of 206 women who, in the period from 1973 to 1975, were treated in a hospital emergency room in a major city following a report of sexual abuse. Their subsequent juvenile and adult criminal records were compared to a matched comparison group. Child sexual abuse was a statistically significant predictor of certain types of offenses, but other indicators of familial neglect and abuse were significant factors as well.

English, D. J., Widom, C. S., & Brandford, C. (2002). [Childhood victimization and delinquency, adult criminality, and violent criminal behavior: A replication and extension. Final Report to NIJ](#): NCJRS 192291. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

This study examined issues related to delinquency, adult criminality, and violence in a new cohort of abused and/or neglected children and matched controls, representing a different geographic area (Northwest), time period (1980's), and ethnic composition (included Native-American youth). In addition to examining the prevalence of delinquency, adult criminality, and violence in the cohort, the study addressed the extent to which there were gender and ethnic differences in the relationship between childhood victimization and crime and violent offending; and it determined the extent to which different types of maltreatment were associated with the increased risk of subsequent delinquent, adult, and violent criminal behavior. The extent to which placement experience mediated delinquent and criminal consequences was also examined. Substantiated cases of child abuse and/or neglect (n=877) from court dependency records during the years 1980-84 were selected from court files in a large urban area in Washington State. A control group of children matched on age, race/ethnicity, gender, and approximate family social class were also identified. Juvenile and adult arrest data were collected from local, State, and Federal law enforcement agencies through 1998 (approximately 15-24 years following dependency). The findings strongly support the relationship between child abuse and neglect and delinquency, adult criminality, and violent criminal behavior. In the study sample, abused and neglected children were 4.8 times more likely to be arrested as a juvenile, 2 times more likely to be arrested as an adult, and 3.1 times more likely to be arrested for a violent crime than matched controls. These findings replicate earlier

findings regarding increases in the risk of criminal behavior for females as well as males. Abused and neglected youth from all three ethnicities (Caucasian, African-American, and Native-American) were at increased risk for being arrested as a juvenile and as an adult compared to non-abused and non-neglected children from the same ethnic background. Preliminary findings regarding placement status at dependency indicated that abused and neglected youth who were placed outside the home were at greater risk of subsequent arrest than abused and neglected youth who remained with their primary caregiver or parent. Policy implications of these findings are discussed.

Fagan, A. A. (2001). The gender cycle of violence: Comparing the effects of child abuse and neglect on criminal offending for males and females. *Violence and Victims, 16*(4), 457-474.

Despite ample evidence of the relationship between childhood maltreatment and offending, the ways in which the cycle of violence operates remain unclear. For example, feminist researchers contend that female victims are more likely to become offenders, compared to male victims, but more research is needed to substantiate this claim. Moreover, the contradictions in research findings—with retrospective research demonstrating that most offenders have histories of abuse, and prospective work indicating that the majority of victims do not become involved in crime—highlight the importance of identifying the intermediating variables that lead from maltreatment to criminality. This review summarizes investigations related to the cycle of violence, discusses the intermediating circumstances that may affect the cycle, and identifies whether or not these processes are similar for women and men.

Fondacaro, K. M., Holt, J. C., & Powell, T. A. (1999). Psychological impact of childhood sexual abuse on male inmates: The importance of perception. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 23*(4), 361-369.

The current study examined the association between childhood sexual victimization and adult psychiatric disorders among male inmates. It further assessed the association between the perception of an event (as sexual abuse or not) and psychiatric diagnoses. A sample of 211 randomly-selected male inmates were interviewed. The Diagnostic Interview Schedule (Version III-R) was used to assess psychiatric diagnoses. An additional questionnaire assessing childhood sexual abuse and perception of childhood sexual abuse was also administered. Forty percent of the

inmates met standard criteria for childhood sexual abuse, which far exceeded rates found in the general population. Significant differences were found between inmates who had a history of childhood sexual abuse and those who did not for a variety of psychiatric diagnoses. Forty-one percent of those who met criteria for childhood sexual abuse did not consider themselves to have been abused. Those who did not consider themselves to have been abused had higher rates of alcohol abuse/dependence, while those who considered themselves to have been abused had higher rates of posttraumatic stress and obsessive-compulsive disorder. This study emphasizes the importance of perception or “cognitive appraisal” of the sexual experience (as abusive or not) and the need for further study regarding the potential mediating role of cognitive appraisal. Other implications of these findings include the need for primary prevention programs designed to reduce childhood sexual abuse, and inmate rehabilitation programs with an emphasis on the connection between victimization and criminality.

Harlow, C. F. (1999). [Prior abuse reported by inmates and probationers](#). NCJ 172879. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.

Weeks, R., & Widom, C. S. (1998). Self-reports of early childhood victimization among incarcerated adult male felons. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 13(3), 346-361.

The extent of childhood victimization (physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect) was assessed retrospectively through self-reports in a sample of 301 convicted adult male felons randomly selected from a New York State medium-correctional facility using a structured interview with known psychometric properties. Overall, 68% of the sample of incarcerated adult male felons reported some form of childhood victimization, although the percentage varied depending on the measure used to assess the childhood abuse experiences. Violent offenders reported significantly more childhood neglect than nonviolent offenders but not more physical abuse. On an overall index of childhood sexual abuse, sex offenders reported higher rates of childhood sexual abuse than other offenders (26.3% vs.12.5%). Implications of these findings are discussed.

McClellan, D. S., Farabee, D., & Crouch, B. M. (1997). Early victimization, drug use, and criminality a comparison of male and female prisoners. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 24(4), 455-476.

Comparative analysis of the relative victimization of 1,030 adult male prisoners and 500 adult female prisoners in Texas reveals significant gender differences in childhood and adult maltreatment and subsequent substance use and criminality. Female inmates report significantly more maltreatment as children than do male inmates. Moreover, the maltreatment of women increases when they become adults, whereas the maltreatment of men drops sharply. The study found childhood maltreatment to be more strongly associated with adult depression and substance dependence among women than among men. The severity of substance misuse and problems associated with it are stronger predictors of female rates of criminal activity than male rates. Recent literature from the social sciences is presented to account for the findings. A female empowerment treatment model to help women attain control over their lives is suggested.

Smith, C., & Thornberry, T. P. (1995). The relationship between childhood maltreatment and adolescent involvement in delinquency. *Criminology*, 33(4), 451-481.

Recent research suggests a link between childhood maltreatment and later involvement in delinquency. This study examines this issue using official and self-report data from the Rochester Youth Development Study. The analysis addresses three central issues: the magnitude of the relationship between early child maltreatment and later delinquency, official and self-reported; the possibility of spuriousness in this relationship; and the impact of more extensive measurement of maltreatment on later delinquency. A significant relationship between child maltreatment and self-reported and official delinquency is found and this relationship, especially for more serious forms of delinquency, remains when controlling for other factors. The results also suggest that more extensive maltreatment is related to higher rates of delinquency. Implications and suggestions for further research are discussed.

Widom, C. S. (1995). [Victims of childhood sexual abuse: Later criminal consequences.](#) Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice.

Widom, C. S., & Ames, M. A. (1994). Criminal consequences of childhood sexual victimization. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 18(4), 303-318.

Using a prospective cohorts design, we assess the long-term criminal consequences of childhood sexual abuse through an examination of official criminal histories for a large sample of validated cases of childhood sexual abuse, compared to cases of physical abuse and neglect and a control group matched for age, race, sex, and approximate family socioeconomic status. Compared to other types of abuse and neglect, early childhood sexual abuse does not uniquely increase an individual's risk for later delinquent and adult criminal behavior. Childhood sexual abuse victims were at increased risk of arrest as a juvenile for being a runaway. As adults, child sexual abuse victims were at higher risk of arrest for sex crimes than controls, as were victims of physical abuse and neglect. Childhood sexual abuse victims were more likely to be arrested for prostitution as adults than other abuse and neglect victims and controls, regardless of gender. However, there was no support for a direct relationship among child sexual abuse, arrests for running away in adolescence, and adult arrests for prostitution. The findings also suggest an association for males between physical abuse and arrests for violent sex crimes (rape and/or sodomy). Caution is needed in interpreting these findings because of exclusive reliance on official record data and the possible impact of agency intervention.

Rivera, B., & Widom, C. S. (1990). Childhood victimization and violent offending. *Violence and Victims*, 5(1), 19-35.

The relationship between childhood victimization and violent offending is examined using a prospective cohorts design. Official criminal histories for a large sample of substantiated and validated cases of physical and sexual abuse and neglect ($N = 908$) from the years 1967 through 1971 were compared to those of a matched control group ($N = 667$) of individuals with no official record of abuse or neglect. Sex-specific and race-specific effects of childhood victimization and other characteristics of violent offending (chronicity, age of onset, temporal patterns, and continuity) are assessed. Childhood victimization increased overall risk for violent offending and particularly increased risk for males and blacks. In comparison to controls, abused and neglected

children began delinquent careers earlier. Temporal patterns of violent offending were examined and childhood victims did not differ in age of arrest for first violent offense, nor were they more likely to continue offending. The findings and their limitations are discussed, as well as directions for future research.

Widom, C. S. (1989). Child abuse, neglect, and violent criminal behavior. *Criminology*, 27(2), 251-271.

Using a prospective cohorts design, official criminal histories for a large sample of substantiated and validated cases of physical and sexual abuse and neglect from the years 1967 through 1971 (n = 908) were compared with those of a matched control group (n = 667) of individuals with no official record of abuse or neglect. Abused and neglected subjects had higher rates of having an adult criminal record than controls and a larger number of arrests as an adult. Based on a logit analysis, a model using four explanatory variables (age, sex, race, and abuse/neglect status) provided a good fit. In comparison with controls, abused and neglected subjects also had a higher frequency of arrests for violent offenses as adults; however, this was due primarily to significantly more adult violent offenses by abused males. Support for the cycle of violence is discussed as well as sex differences in the results, limitations of the findings, and implications for further research.

Widom, C. S. (1989). Does violence beget violence? A critical examination of the literature. *Psychological Bulletin*, 106(1), 3-28.

Critically examines the "violence breeds violence" hypothesis broadly defined. Organized into seven sections, the literature review includes (a) the abuse breeds abuse hypothesis; (b) reports of small numbers of violent/homicidal offenders; (c) studies examining the relationship of abuse and neglect to delinquency; (d) to violent behavior, and (e) to aggressive behavior in infants and young children; (f) abuse, withdrawal, and self-destructive behavior; and (g) studies of the impact of witnessing or observing violent behavior. A detailed discussion of methodological considerations and shortcomings precedes the review. The author concludes that existing knowledge of the long-term consequences of abusive home environments is limited and suggests that conclusions about the strength of the cycle of violence be tempered by the dearth of convincing empirical evidence. Recommendations are made for further research. (PsycINFO Database Record © 2012 APA, all rights reserved)