



**Results from the
Long-term Inmate Survey:
Focus on Child Abuse Histories**

Report to the
Alaska Department of Corrections

by

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Contents

Results from the Long-term Inmate Survey: Focus on Child Abuse Histories

Incidence of Child Abuse in American Society	2
Incidence of Child Abuse Among Prisoners	2
Outline of the Research Project	4
Data Collection	5
Sample Biases	6
Child Abuse Histories of Alaska’s Long-term Inmates	7
<i>Figure 1. Percent of Long-term Inmates Reporting Specific Reporting Specific Types of Physical Abuse</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Figure 2. Percent of Long-term Inmates Reporting Specific Reporting Specific Types of Neglect</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Figure 3. Percent of Long-term Inmates Reporting Specific Reporting Specific Types of Sexual Abuse</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Figure 4. Percent of Long-term Inmates Reporting Specific Reporting Abuse as Children</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Figure 5. Percent of Long-term Inmates Reporting Specific Reporting Abuse as Children by Race</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Figure 6. Percent of Long-term Inmates Reporting Specific Reporting Abuse as Children by Type of Abuse and Age at First Arrest</i>	<i>10</i>
Cycle of Violence	11
Correlates of Abuse	11
Conclusions	13
References	14

Background Studies

- A. Incidence of Child Abuse and the Relationship to Criminality: Literature Review
- B. Measuring Child Abuse and Neglect: A Review of Methods
- C. Survey Methods and Administration
- D. An Assessment of Survey Biases
- E. Tables to Support Profile Analysis
- F. Personal Interview Administration and Results
- G. Correlates of Abuse

Contents of Background Studies

A. Incidence of Child Abuse and the Relationship to Criminality: Literature Review

Introduction	1
Incidence of Child Abuse in American Society	2
Incidence of Child Abuse Among Prisoners	3
<i>Table 1. Child Abuse Histories of Prisoners</i>	4
Prospective Relational Studies	6
<i>Table 2. Major Prospective Studies of Child Maltreatment and Later Criminality Using Control Samples</i>	7
Summary	9
References	10

B. Measuring Child Abuse and Neglect: A Review of Methods

Sources of Instruments	1
Abuse and Neglect Measures	2
Administration of the Survey	6
References	8

C. Survey Methods and Administration

Congregate Interview	1
Methods of Administration	2
<i>Table 1. DOC Inmate Profile Response Rates by Facility</i>	2
Administration Outcomes	4
Personal Interview	8
<i>Table 2. Personal Interviews by Facility</i>	9
Inmate Casefile Jacket Survey	10
Method of Administration	11
<i>Table 3. DOC Inmate Casefile Jacket Surveys by Facility</i>	11
Administration Outcomes	12
Appendix	13
Consent Form	14
Scantron Form	15
Fill-In Answer Sheet	17
Overhead Projector Slide	26
Microsoft Access Data Entry Screen	27
Offender Profile Questionnaire	28
Inmate Interview Response Form	49
Inmate Interview Coding Sheet	51

D. An Assessment of Survey Biases

<i>Table 1: DOC Inmate Profile Response Rates by Facility</i>	1
Race	2
Birth State	2
Sentence Length	2
<i>Table 2: Distribution of Long-term Inmates by Race and Sample</i>	2
<i>Table 3: Distribution of Long-term Inmates by Birth State and Sample</i>	2
Current Offense	3
Initial Security Level	3
Work History	3

Table 4: Distribution of Long-term Inmates by Type of Crime and Sample	3
Table 5: Distribution of Long-term Inmates by Initial Classification Level and Sample	3
Evidence of Severe Problems as Adults	4
Evidence of Severe Problems as Children	4
Table 6: Distribution of Long-term Inmates by Work History and Sample	4
Table 7: Percent Evidence of Severe Adult Problems by Type of Problem and Sample	4
Child Abuse Histories	5
Adult Criminal Record	5
Table 8: Percent Evidence of Severe Children Problems by Type of Problem and Sample	5
Table 9: Percent Evidence of Child Abuse While Child by Type of Abuse and Sample	5
Juvenile Criminal Record	6
Summary	6
Table 10: Prior Adult Records by Type of Offense and Sample	6
Table 11: Prior Juvenile Records by Type of Offense and Sample	6

E. Tables to Support Profile Analysis

Table 1: Percent of Long-term Inmates Reporting Physical Abuse by Gender and Race	2
Table 2: Percent of Long-term Inmates Reporting Physical Abuse by Offense	3
Table 3: Percent of Long-term Inmates Reporting Neglect by Gender and Race	4
Table 4: Percent of Long-term Inmates Reporting Neglect by Offense	5
Table 5: Percent of Long-term Inmates Reporting Sexual Abuse by Gender and Race	6
Table 6: Percent of Long-term Inmates Reporting Sexual Abuse by Offense	7
Table 7: Reported Types of Childhood Abuse by Selected Characteristics of Long-term Inmates	8

F. Personal Interview Administration and Results

Purpose	1
The Subjects	1
The Instruments	2
Table 1: Personal Interviews by Facility	2
Administration	3
Data Verification and Inter-rater Reliability	3
Results	4
Table 2. Highest Grade Achieved	5
Table 3. Cycle of Abuse Results from Personal Interviews	5
Table 4. Distribution of Type and Degree of Abuse	6
Conclusion	7
Table 5. Mean Age of Life-course Markers	7

G. Correlates of Abuse

Measures of Abuse	1
Table 1: Measures of Child Abuse	2
Table 3: Neglect Scores for Long-term Inmates Participating in the Congregate Interview	5
Table 2: Child Sex Abuse Scores for Long-term Inmates Participating in the Congregate Interview	5
Measures of Criminal Experience, Hostility, Disassociation, Anxiety Coping Strategies and Psychological Treatment History	6
Table 4: Measures of Plausible Consequences	6
Bivariate Correlations	10
Table 5. Correlation Coefficients between Types of Abuse and Indicators of Hostility, Disassociation, Coping Strategies, Sentence Length, and Security Level	10
Table 6. Mean Abuse Scores by Conviction Offense (Either Violent or Sex Offense)	11
Multivariate Models	11

RESULTS FROM THE LONG-TERM INMATE SURVEY: FOCUS ON CHILD ABUSE HISTORIES

Child abuse and neglect have been addressed by many disciplines of government for a variety of reasons. Departments of youth services and departments of social work across the country are concerned with intervening such that youth are protected from abuse. These interventions tend to focus on separating the child from the situation with secondary attention towards ameliorating the situation.

Schools and medical doctors are expected (often required by law) to report abuse. Their role is to be the eyes and ears of regulatory agencies (e.g., police, social services). As with police the principal role is to provide information to insure that extant abuse is stopped.

Police intervene to stop the current abuse and insure that the abuser is available for prosecution. Police intervene when as Klockars suggests “Something ought not to be happening about which something ought to be done now” (1985:16).

Courts in concert with corrections also have a role in identification of abuse and assignment of abusers to treatment. Their role is different than others noted above in that their focus is not on the abused child but on the abuser. Courts focus on adjudication of those charged with abuse (both civilly and criminally), assign blame, and prescribe treatment (sentence). Correctional agencies administer the sentence. Correctional agencies are in the unique position to “fix” the abuser, as adjudicated abusers become wards of the correctional system. This offers correctional agencies both the time and opportunity to transform abusers. The only agency of government that focuses on repairing the abuser is corrections—all others focus on separating the child from the abuser (social services often make services available to abusers but their focus is on the child’s welfare). This unique opportunity promises to diminish child abuse by treating the abuser.

The focus on abusers occurs for several reasons. First, there is the hope that successful treatment will result in cession of abusive behavior—a good in its own right. The second reason is that abusers are thought to produce abusers. That is, children who are abused are thought to grow up to be abusers creating a production cycle of abusers. Additionally, there is ample empirical evidence that a history of child abuse is related to a wide range of juvenile and adult behavioral problems, many of which land victims of abuse into the criminal justice system as offenders.

From these considerations come the three focal concerns of the present study: 1) to describe the childhood experiences of a sample of long-term inmates; 2) to address the “cycle of abuse” issue; and 3) present the correlates of abuse which may impact the pattern of offending or inmate functioning. These focal concerns are addressed separately via differing strategies of investigation and analysis.

We have structured our report by extracting the important and most relevant information from the various aspects of our work as an introduction to the complete report. The larger pieces follow and should be consulted for additional detail. We begin by first presenting a review of the literature

concerning not only child abuse in general but also a review of the literature on measuring abuse in correctional populations. Discussions of the data collection processes and the determination of sample biases follow these sections. Next is a presentation of the profile of the long-term inmates who volunteered for the study. The cycle of abuse concern is addressed in the discussion of the personal interview data and is followed by presenting the correlates of abuse. Because the congregate interview is unique, the instrument used is described in great detail along with the data collection instruments used in the other phases.

Incidence of Child Abuse in American Society

The incidence of child abuse in the society is captured in several polls that asked national probability samples of adults if they had been victims of abuse as children. The following three surveys provide a window into the cross-national incidence of child abuse. In 1989 the Gallup organization asked a sample of survey respondents “Were you, yourself, ever a victim of child abuse” (cited in Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1990)—8 percent indicated yes (5 percent for males, 10 percent for females). In 1994 the Gallup organization asked a more focused question “When you were growing up, do you remember any time when you were punched or kicked or choked by a parent or other adult guardian” (cited in Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1994)—12 percent indicated yes (13 percent of males, and 10 percent of females). Finally, in 1995 the Gallup organization posed a question focused on child sexual abuse (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1996). They asked if parents, as children, had been touched in a sexual way or forced to touch someone else in a sexual way—23 percent indicated they had. The same survey asked if they had been forced to have sex before they were 18—slightly less than 10 percent indicated yes.

What is apparent is that child abuse is frequent—at least if you ask people if they had experienced abuse. Based on these surveys it appear that somewhere between 10 and 20 percent of children in the general population experience some form of abuse.

Incidence of Child Abuse Among Prisoners

The survey of the literature isolated six studies of adult prisoners that are reviewed here. The first of these studies is a Survey of Prisoners, by the U.S. Bureau of the Census on behalf of the Bureau of Justice Statistics (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1993); the second and third studies were conducted by Departments of Corrections in Virginia (1983) and Oregon (1993); and the fourth, fifth, and sixth studies by independent researchers with the cooperation of the departments of corrections responsible for the prisoners studied, Weeks and Widom (in press), Dutton and Hart (1992) and Dewey (1997). These six studies sampled prisoners from 45 randomly selected states, Virginia, Oregon, New York, the Pacific Region of Canada, and Alaska respectively. Four of these

studies used personal interviews of the prisoners as their method of data collection, one relied upon official records, and one used a self-administered survey.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (1993) found lower rates of reported abuse than the other studies reviewed here. These rates were 12 percent for males and 31 percent for female prisoners reporting a history of child abuse. Though the BJS publication does not discuss the basis of these estimates, a review of instruments presently in use by BJS suggests that their questionnaire elicits information only about serious assault (shot at or knifed) and serious sexual assault (sexual contact against will). This suggests that the Bureau of Justice Statistics was utilizing a narrow definition of abuse. Further there were few probing questions to stimulate the subjects memory. Thus, it appears likely that instrumentation accounts for the lower incidence of reported abuse in the BJS prisoner's survey.

The Virginia Department of Corrections (1983) study of the child abuse histories of prisoners relied in an abbreviated six item questionnaire (two demographic questions, one abuse question with a follow-up about the abuser, and two questions concerned with whether the inmate had abused his/her children). The abuse question was designed to reflect statutory requirements for legal abuse in place at the time in Virginia. The study isolated rates of child abuse histories among the prisoners of 28 percent for males and 0 percent for females.¹ The authors of the study urged caution in relying on these findings.

The Oregon Department of Corrections (1993) and the Dewey (1997) focused their inquiries on incarcerated women. The Oregon study interviewed a random sample of 89 women housed at the Oregon Women's Correctional Center and the Columbia River Correctional Institution. The Dewey study was based on self selected samples of 49 women at two Alaska correctional facilities, Meadowcreek and Sixth Avenue Correctional Center, who completed self-administered surveys. Both studies reported high rates of child abuse victimization among women prisoners, 72 percent in Oregon and 73.5 percent in Alaska. Neither of these studies defined the terms they used, leaving the respondent to evaluate what was meant by abuse. The Oregon study asked "would you say that you were ever physically abused. . . would you say that you have ever been molested, raped or sexually abused" (Oregon Department of Corrections, 1993, p. 5). Likewise Dewey asked the subjects "if, as a child they had experienced sexual, emotional, and/or physical abuse" (Dewey, 1997, p. 35). It is noteworthy that the self-administered questionnaire used in the study of Alaska women and interview instrument used in Oregon produced similar results.

The Weeks and Widom (in press) study focused on male inmates. This study included both the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) and the Self-Report of Child Abuse Physical (SRCAP) in their instrument to measure physical abuse. The CTS instrument utilizes a stricter definition than the SRCAP limiting child abuse to the very severe violence level of the scale. The CTS instrument resulted in 34.9 percent of the prisoners reporting child abuse. Using the SRCAP instrument 58.1 percent of the prisoners reported being abused as a child. Combining the two instruments resulted

¹ Only 18 women responded to the survey, none indicating a history of abuse. The authors of the original study were justifiably skeptical of this result and caution against its use.

in 68 percent of the prisoners reporting some kind of physical abuse as a child. The study also captured information about childhood sexual abuse and neglect. Weeks and Widom found that slightly more than 14 percent of prisoners report some form of sexual abuse and about 16 percent report neglect, both before age 12.

The Dutton and Hart (1992) study used official records as their data source for information about male inmates incarcerated at seven Correctional Service of Canada institutions within the Pacific Rim. These records included criminal records, police reports, medical, psychological and psychiatric evaluations and social services records. Dutton and Hart reported rates of 31 percent for physical abuse, 11 percent sexual abuse and 13 percent other abuse (includes extreme neglect and witnessing interparental physical or sexual assault). These results are similar to that obtained in Weeks and Widom (in press).

If we rely on the Weeks and Widom (in press) and the Dutton and Hart studies we would estimate the male inmate abuse and neglect populations in Alaska's prisons as follows. We would expect that between 30 and 40 percent of male inmates have child physical abuse histories, between 10 and 15 percent have child sexual abuse histories, and that about 15 percent were neglected as children. The studies in Oregon (Oregon DOC, 1993) and earlier in Alaska (Dewey, 1997) present a far different picture for women. Though neither study provided information about types of abuse (e.g., physical, sexual, or neglect) both lead us to expect in excess of 70 percent of incarcerated women to have histories of child abuse.² (See attached study, "Incidence of Child Abuse and the Relationship to Criminality: Literature Review.")

Outline of the Research Project

In cooperation with the DOC, the Justice Center developed a phased approach to the project that would allow for a substantive description of the general long-term inmate population. The three phases would be:

- 1) a literature review, congregate interview protocol development, and a descriptive report;
- 2) a face to face interviews and official file reviews; and
- 3) an extensive analysis of the combined data to isolate correlates.

Phase One. The first phase began with an extensive literature review of existing inmate surveys addressing the project's concerns that then aided in the development of all of the project's survey instruments. The literature review was further divided into those studies that focused on the definitions of abuse and neglect and those studies which focused on the methods of collecting that

² A 1987 study by the American Correctional Association reports that slightly more than 60 percent of incarcerated women reported childhood physical abuse and nearly 55 percent reported childhood sexual abuse (cited in 1992 Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics at p. 651).

type of information from an incarcerated population. The project's congregate interview instrument was developed from the best aspects of the existing surveys, pre-tested upon a small group of inmates and modified slightly for use in Alaska. The literature review also provided guidance on conducting surveys with inmates but we relied heavily on the expertise of DOC personnel on how to recruit inmates for the congregate interviews in the various institutions. The Justice Center has completed congregate interviews with 240 inmates with sentences of 5 years or more (an overall response rate of 35 percent).

Phase Two. The next phase consisted of face-to-face interviews with selected inmates and a review of inmate files. The literature review guided the development of the face to face interview protocol and the coding sheet for the inmate record review.

Phase Three. The last phase involved an extensive and sophisticated analysis of the data to identify underlying relationships not easily visible from the descriptive data.

Study Subjects. The original RFP target population was described as "long-term" offenders. DOC defined this as those sentenced to prison for 5 years or more. DOC provided the Justice Center with the list of subjects broken down by institution. Each institution further evaluated the list with respect to the criteria. This final list of inmates was the target population and each of these was given an opportunity to participate. Both male and female inmates were targeted.

During the course of the literature review it became apparent that there are many definitions of childhood physical abuse, sexual abuse and neglect that are not well defined in the literature either for the general population or for incarcerated populations. Ours is a hybrid instrument that uses pieces of other instruments that we deemed appropriate to the project. Some of the pieces have been defined by their creators as specific sub-scales and we have tried to keep these sub-scales intact in order to provide comparable data. These sub-scales define physical abuse, sexual abuse and neglect and we have followed the respective original creators in summarizing and presenting this information. (See attached study, "Measuring Child Abuse and Neglect: A Review of Methods" for an in-depth review of the measurement literature that shaped this study.)

Data Collection

Three distinct data collection efforts were engaged in this effort: congregate interviews, review of inmate "jackets," and in-person interviews with congregate interview participants. The congregate interviews provide information used to describe the child abuse histories of inmates and were the basis of the correlates of abuse study. Data developed from the jackets were used principally to assess biases in the sample. Finally, the interview data were used to probe abuse experience and explore the "cycle of violence" thesis.

Congregate Interview. The Justice Center staff worked closely with the individual institution contacts identified by DOC Headquarters. Each institution devised a slightly different method of securing the cooperation of the target population. However, once the final institutional pool was assembled, the survey process was the same. The Justice Center Research Associates explained the nature of the study and its content to the assembled inmates and asked for their voluntary cooperation. Those that remained were given the response booklet and answer sheet. An overhead projector was used in conjunction with reading each question. Some questions required the inmate to fill in their response on a Scantron answer sheet and other questions were answered directly on the response booklet. Every effort was made to minimize interactions and maximize the privacy of the respondents. The Justice Center Research Associates answered individual questions, monitored the inmates as they responded and collected all materials. Some inmates were given incentives to participate and others were not. This did not appear to change the rate of volunteering. Each session took about 1 hour and 15 minutes.

Justice Center staff visited seven institutions and obtained 240 surveys. The Scantron answer sheets were mechanically scored and Justice Center Research Associates coded those written in the response booklets. These data represent the foundation of the study. (See attached study, "Survey Methods and Administration" for a detailed description of the congregated interviews and data collection procedures for collection of official file information.)

Inmate Jackets. In an effort to assess the representativeness of the congregated interview sample, data were collected from the official inmate files (both OBSCIS and the paper files) for respondents and a random sample of non-respondents. Data about inmate demographics, sentence, conviction offense, adult and juvenile problems, and adult and juvenile criminal records was developed for 240 congregated interview respondents and 149 non-respondents.

In-Person Interviews. The congregated interviews were not able to develop detailed information about abuse experience. In-person interviews were conducted to supplement data developed in congregated interviews. The focus of the in-person interviews was on details of abuse experiences and on information to explore the cycle of abuse hypothesis. Interviews were conducted with a non-random sample of 100 inmates from Hiland Mountain, Palmer Medium, Palmer Maximum, and Spring Creek who had initially participated in the congregated interviews.

Sample Biases

As participation in the congregated interview was voluntary, it was considered important to explore the possibility that those choosing to participate were not representative of the long-term inmate population in Alaska's institutions. As noted above, this was accomplished by comparing respondent and non-respondent information developed from inmate official records. Comparisons were made of race, birth-state, sentence length, current offense, initial security level, work history,

evidence of severe adult or juvenile problems, child abuse histories, and adult and juvenile criminal records.

While some differences were apparent, it appears that the congregate interview sample is “fairly” representative of the larger population. That noted, there are several significant biases. There is a racial bias with Whites over-represented and Alaska Natives under-represented in the congregate interview sample. Also, there appears to be a difference in child abuse histories. Congregate interview participant’s official files were more likely to exhibit evidence of child sexual abuse or neglect than the records of non-participants. (See attached study “An Assessment of Survey Biases” for details.)

Child Abuse Histories of Alaska’s Long-term Inmates

The congregate interviews provide information about the abuse histories of Alaska’s long-term inmates. Abuse was explored along three conceptual dimensions: physical abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse. These conceptions of abuse were measured using self-report instruments adapted from Widom to the congregate interview procedure. The only measures created specifically for this survey was a need series designed to determine whether basic needs were met during childhood. This series complements the Widom neglect measures.

Figures 1 through 3 highlight the specific childhood experiences that were queried and the percent of inmates that indicated they had such experience. Figure 1 presents the percent of respondents who indicated they experienced physical abuse. Two series are presented: the very severe violence scale (VSV), which asks if a family member ever beat, burned, or used a deadly weapon on the inmate while the inmate was a child; and, the self-reported child abuse-physical (SRCAP), which asks if anyone did the specified behaviors to the inmate while he/she was a child. Not surprisingly, ‘more serious’ physical abuse is less frequently reported than ‘more minor’ forms. What is surprising is the percentage of respondents who reported some form of physical abuse. When we focus on physical abuse from a family member (VSV) we note that nearly 50 percent of respondents report some form of physical abuse while children. When the focus shifts to abuse by anyone (SRCAP) we note that over 80 percent indicated they experienced some form of physical abused.

Figure 2 presents percentages of respondents indicating they had been neglected as children. Again two series are presented: the neglect series from Widom and the needs series developed by the Justice Center to measure satisfaction of basic needs. Both series indicate that severe forms of neglect of basic needs (e.g., food, shelter, clothing) are less frequently reported than neglect of nurturing (e.g., adults who care, guidance, mentoring). However, when asked if they had experienced any form of neglect nearly 30 percent of respondents to the Widom neglect series indicated they had while slightly more than 65 percent reported neglect when responding to the Justice Center needs series.

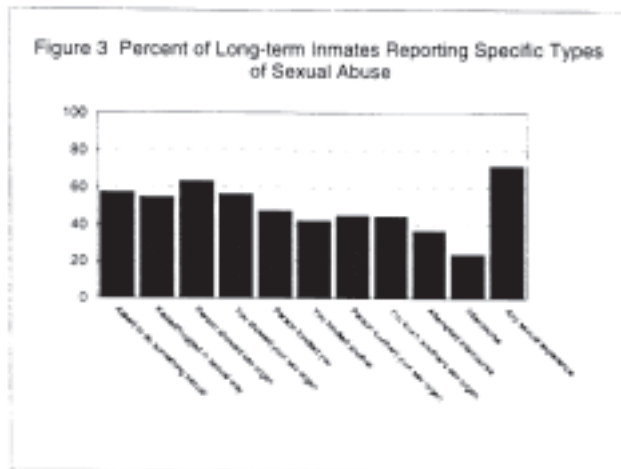
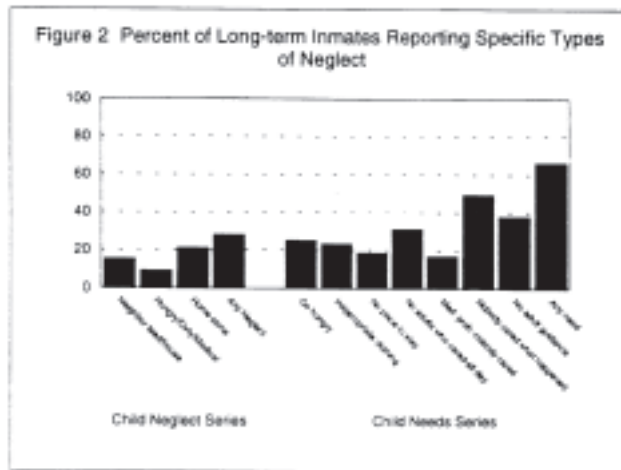
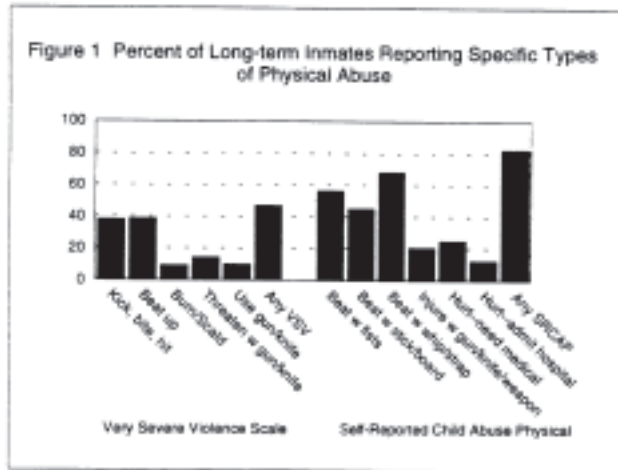


Figure 3 presents percentages of respondents indicating they had specific sexual experiences before they were 12 years of age. Slightly more than 70 percent of respondents indicated that they had one or more of the sexual experiences before they were twelve years of age. While it is evident that a substantial majority of long-term offenders had sexual experience early in childhood just slightly less than 25 percent indicated they consider the experience abuse.

The remaining figures explore child abuse histories by sex, race, and age at first arrest. Figure 4 highlights the different histories of male and female inmates. Women are more likely to report experiencing abuse than men particularly when the abuse measures tap family abuse, neglect, need, and sexual abuse. Another difference appears when women were asked if they considered their early childhood sexual experience abuse. Over 70 percent of the women participating in the congregative interview indicated they consider their experience sexual abuse but just 17 percent of the men felt they had been sexually abused.

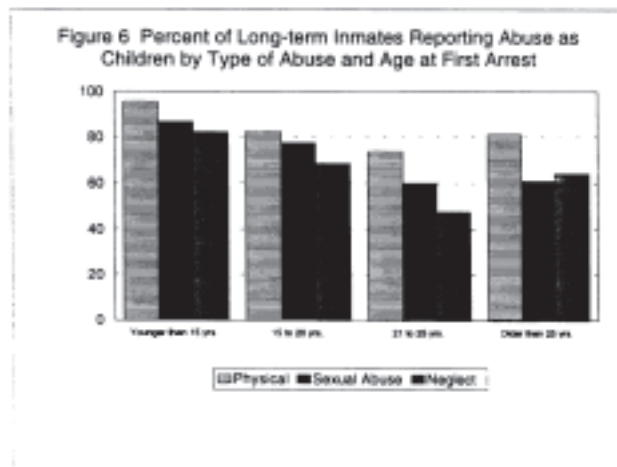
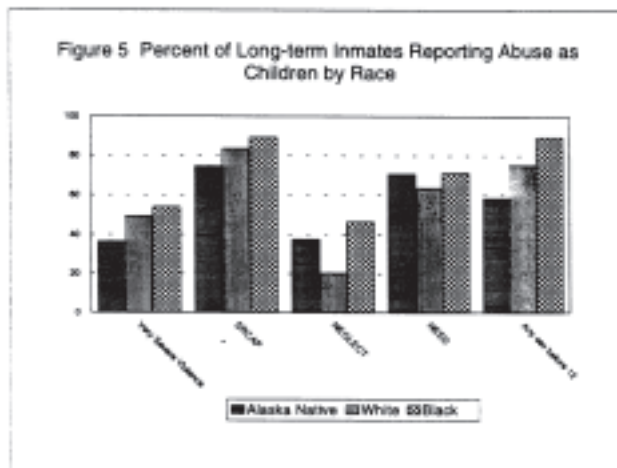
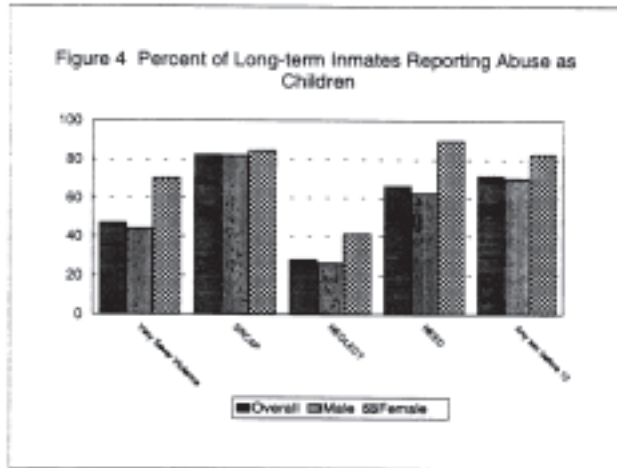
Figure 5 highlights racial differences. A higher percentage of African-American inmates reported physical abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse than either Whites or Alaska Natives. White inmates were next most likely to report abuse but Alaska Native inmates were more likely to report neglect or unmet needs than Whites.

Figure 6 presents the relationship between forms of abuse and age at first arrest. It is apparent that, regardless of the form of abuse (Physical-SRCAP, Neglect-Needs, and Sexual Experience), inmates who reported early ages of first arrest were more likely to also report a history of abuse as a child.

Other interesting findings (see attached tables, “Tables to Support Profile Analysis,” for detailed descriptive information about the abuse experiences reported) include:

- Inmates who report no juvenile arrests were less likely to report abuse than those with arrest records (see Table 7). In fact 100 percent of the 52 respondents who indicated they had three or more juvenile arrests reported experiencing physical abuse (SRCAP) as a child.
- Inmates who reported growing up in villages, as indicated by attending elementary school in villages, were less likely to report abuse but more likely to report neglect (see Table 7).
- Inmates who reported growing up in a two-parent family were less likely to report a history of abuse or neglect (see Table 7).
- Inmates whose parents abused alcohol or drugs were more likely to report histories of abuse and neglect (see Table 7).

There were very few surprises in these data. The most compelling finding is how much abuse long-term inmates reported. We were not surprised that this population was abused as children but we were not prepared for the magnitude or the rates. Widom, using the same measures of abuse and neglect, found levels of abuse reported among male inmates much lower than those among Alaska’s long-term inmates. The differences could be do to: the class of inmates chosen (i.e., long-term inmates may have histories that are different inmates generally); procedural differences in data collection (Widom used intake interviews; this study relied on congregative interviews); or it could



be that there is a higher level of abuse in Alaska than in the midwestern area that was the focus of Widom's attention. Regardless of the reason the levels of abuse are strikingly high.

Cycle of Violence

The focus of the personal interviews was to provide an alternative to the structure inherent in the congregate interview for obtaining information about the childhoods of these long-term inmates. We used the interview to explore the "cycle of abuse" thesis and to explore areas not covered in the congregate interviews or official records as well as allowing the subject to describe their own childhood and any abuse they may have encountered. Much of the information from the personal interview was coded for analysis, but the insights gained from these one-to-one interviews greatly expanded our appreciation of the more statistical data. (For a detailed discussion of the in-person interview data see attached study, "Personal Interview Administration and Results.")

We conducted 100 open-ended, face-to-face interviews lasting about 30 minutes. All of the eligible female inmates at HMCC and all of the eligible men at MCCC were given an opportunity to volunteer for the personal interview and we had an overall response rate of 85 percent. Many of the original sample had been moved to Arizona or transferred by the time of the interview.

The interview began with the interviewer merely asking the subject to describe what it was like growing up. The interviewer recorded the responses, probed for detail and prompted the subject to recall certain items so that we could obtain a consistent data set. Later, the interviewer rated these responses and coded the data for entry. The subjective judgements as to the nature and extent of abuse were difficult to consistently demonstrate, making the more structured approaches appear to have an advantage when statistical precision is required.

We did not see compelling, statistical evidence for the existence of a "cycle of abuse." Indeed, we found the inmates, almost every one, adamant about *not* treating their kids as they had been treated. The vague recollections or lack of contact with the parents or grandparents hindered precise determination of parental upbringing. For many, the topic of their own parents' abuse had never been raised in the family, and for others the lack of consistent caregivers made the question of parental abuse moot. There were just too many individuals in the child's life to clearly isolate the main "parent." We did see abused parents who abused the subject who, in turn, abused their own children. But we also saw families with no abuse history and still the subject abused their kids.

Overall, the interviews shed considerable light on the quality of the lives of these long-term inmate: they tended to have lived disrupted, unstable and somewhat abusive childhoods.

Correlates of Abuse

The focus of our concern about correlates of abuse was on "plausible consequences" of abuse. We focused on two principal types of consequences: criminal and personality. The focus on

criminal consequences were of two type: the nature of the conviction offense (either violent or sex offenses) and nature of incarceration (length of sentence and initial security level). The personality consequences explored hostility, disassociation, anxiety, coping strategies (rational problem solving or escapist), and histories of psychological treatment.

For several reasons measures had to be developed or refined before the analysis could proceed. First, the abuse measures used in the descriptive discussion were viewed as problematic because they did not account for seriousness of the reported abuse or chronicity. Second, simple summated scores are inappropriate unless it is determined that the resultant scales are one-dimensional. To this end refined measures of abuse and measures of “plausible consequences” were develop through a process of data reduction (factor analysis) to produce a limited number of uni-dimensional scales that were then tested for internal consistency. (See pp. 1-10 of the attached study, “Correlates of Abuse,” for a detailed discussion of measures construction.)

Seven abuse measures were constructed. The Needs series developed by the Justice Center produced one measure, as did the Widom Neglect series. Two physical abuse scales each were produced from the VSV series and the SRCAP series. The two series distinguish less severe abuse (hitting, beating, etc.) from serious physical harm (hospitalization, use of deadly weapons, etc.). The scales developed from the VSV series of questions are labeled Physical Abuse (family) and Physical Harm (family) to indicate less and more severe abuse, respectively, at the hands of family members. The SRCAP measures are label similarly but indicate “any source” of abuse. Finally, the child sexual experience measure was a simple summated scale of the 10 sexual experience items.

Measures of plausible consequences were of several types. First, violent offenders were distinguished from others by a dummy code (0 if non-violent current offense, 1 if violent current offense). Second, sex offenders were distinguished by a similar dummy code. Third, sentence length and initial security level were extracted from official records. Fourth, the disassociation/hostility series captured in the congregate interview was factor analyzed producing three relevant factors: hostility, disassociation, and anxiety. Fifth, the coping strategies for dealing with problems questions captured during the congregate interviews was factor analyzed producing two relevant factors: rational analytical problem solving, and escapist. Finally, a four question previous psychological treatment series was examined and produce a scale titled psychological treatment history.

Once the measures were created two forms of analysis were conducted: first, a bivariate correlation analysis (see pp. 10-11, “Correlates of Abuse”) and, second, a multivariate analysis that in separate equations regressed the plausible consequences on the types of abuse.

The results of the correlates studies are that there appears to be a weak relationship between some measures of abuse (particularly physical abuse in the family and child sexual experience) and several of the personality variables (particularly hostility, anxiety, escapist, and histories of psychological treatment). The type of offense, sentence length, or initial security level were not predicted by any of the forms of child abuse.

Conclusions

We have completed an ambitious project which for the first time has examined the child abuse histories of a significant, and growing, portion of the Department of Corrections. These long-term inmates, those with sentences of 5 years or more, represent a challenge to the Department and to the larger society from which they came. The Department is faced with two questions: What is best for these individual now that they are in custody? and, How do we prevent others from ever making it that far in the first place? Our study cannot hope to be the final answer to either of these complex questions but we have been able to push ahead our knowledge of these people significantly. There are three main facets of this problem about which we now have a much clearer picture:

- **THERE HAS BEEN A GREAT DEAL OF ABUSE IN THE LIVES OF THESE INDIVIDUALS**

We have documented the amount of abuse experienced by these individuals using both our congregate and personal interviews. Clearly, we found a significantly higher percentage of these individuals who have be abused than one sees in other studies of troubled individuals. They have experienced a great deal of physical, emotional and sexual abuse as well as neglect. The reasons behind this phenomenon are unclear and require further study.

- **THERE IS NO CLEAR EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE “CYCLE OF VIOLENCE” THESIS**

We have used our personal interviews in an attempt to uncover evidence for a “cycle of abuse” and have found no hard evidence that it exists. Many inmates who were abused as children indicated they would not treat their children that way. We were unable to determine whether parents of abused inmates had themselves been abused, as interview subjects had very little information about their parent’s childhood. Though this statistical analysis does not support a “cycle of abuse” thesis, it is important to note that among the inmates interviewed, inmates who experienced abuse in childhood were more likely to abuse than those who were not. This question will require more precise measures of parental abuse histories than were available from their abused children.

- **ABUSE HISTORIES ARE WEAKLY RELATED TO OFFENSE TYPES AND PERSONALITY PROBLEMS**

The congregate interview provided a large and complex data set and allowed us to perform a multivariate analysis examining the relation between forms of abuse and problem behaviors and feelings. The most important finding from the multivariate analysis is that child abuse histories do not account for problem behaviors and feelings among long-term inmates. While

it remains likely that child abuse is a contributing factor, it is apparent that a great deal more than child abuse must be considered if we are to fully understand these problematic behaviors and feelings. That noted, it is important to remember that the analysis was focused on long-term inmates. A review of other segments of the inmate population may reveal other results.

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