



Research at a glance

Child Victims of Federally Sentenced Offenders: A Profile of Victims and Perpetrators

The majority of crimes committed against child victims by federal offenders are perpetrated by a friend or acquaintance.

Why we did this study

Building on previous research (Gobeil, Barnum, Euch, 2012), and including both registered and non-registered victims with the National Victim Service Program (NVSP) at CSC, the present study was launched to examine the characteristics of offenders who have perpetrated a crime against a child, as well as to provide information on child victims of federally sentenced offenders relating to the crimes perpetrated against them, the victimization methods used (e.g., abuse of power, weapons, threats), and the physical and psychological harm caused.

What we did

Data were extracted from CSC's administrative database, the Offender Management System (OMS) on a total population of 3,518 men and women offenders who had ever had a child victim on a current or a previous sentence. These men and women ranged in age from 17 to 91 years of age. The majority were White (60.6%), 26.5% were of Aboriginal ancestry, and 6.6% were Black.

A subsample of the total population of offenders was randomly selected for an in-depth file review to obtain further information documented in the text fields of the OMS files, including victim information. This review involved 488 offenders (478 men and 10 women). Through the file review, a total of 1,474 child victims were identified who were on average under 15 years of age at the time of victimization.

What we found

For the population of offenders who had ever had a child victim, over half were incarcerated on the current sentence for a sexual offence and had an average sentence length of about 4 years. Over 40% of perpetrators had themselves been child victims of abuse.

The crimes most often perpetrated against child victims of federal offenders were sexual in nature; about one third experienced some form of nonsexual

violence. Perpetrators were known to the victims in 71% of the cases. Victims experienced a range of negative psychological and physical consequences as a result of these crimes. Compared to child victims who were not registered with the NVSP, registered victims were more likely to have been victimized by a parental figure and they were more likely victims of offences of a sexual nature.

What it means

Child victims are a vulnerable group in need of support and protection. Better quality control over data collection could provide an important source of information that would form the basis for planning for services. In addition, significantly high rates of victimization among the federal offenders in this sample suggests that understanding offenders' histories of abuse could contribute to planning of interventions that consider the role of personal abuse in the lives of offenders and the impact this experience has on their risk to offend. As indicated by the low number of child victims registered with the NVSP, there may be a larger proportion of victims who could benefit from these services.

For more information

Scott, T., Grace, R., Perley-Robertson, B., & McKercher, L. E. (2017). *Child Victims of Crime: A Profile of Victims and Perpetrators* (Research Report R-381). Ottawa, Ontario: Correctional Service of Canada.

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