Improving data systems about juvenile victimization in the United States

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Received 16 October 2001; received in revised form 25 June 2002; accepted 30 June 2002

Abstract

Objective: To suggest improvements to 13 data sets and systems that collect information about juvenile victimization in United States.

Method: The suggestions were gathered from a variety of sources, including data system users and administrators, as well as a special meeting convened on the topic by the National Consortium on Children, Families and the Law in Washington, DC (December 2000).

Results: Key areas of improvement were identified for each of 13 US data systems and possible solutions were identified.

Conclusions: This paper suggests three broad categories of improvements that apply to a number of data systems. First, data systems could expand the coverage of the systems to include more jurisdictions or other segments of the population. Second, in order to be more comprehensive and specific to child victimization, the systems need to create more specific data items, questions, or response categories. Finally, the data systems need to be modified to provide continuity and interrelationships among systems, either by using uniform definitions, or integrating data systems to facilitate the tracking of children across systems.

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Keywords: Victimization; Statistics; Juvenile; Data system

Introduction

The victimization of children and youth is a major problem that attracts considerable public and policy attention. Evidence suggests that juveniles are among those at highest risk for exposure to crime and violence (Hashima & Finkelhor, 1999). Children experience the same

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crimes as adults, such as assaults, rapes, and personal thefts, but in addition are also victims of crimes occurring only in childhood, such as child molestation, neglect and family abductions. Institutionally, juvenile victimizations can be broken down into three categories (Finkelhor & Hashima, 2001). The first category, “conventional crime,” includes rape, robbery, homicide, property crime and other crimes of concern to law enforcement in which the victims are children and youth. The second category, “child maltreatment” includes crimes that are violations of child welfare statutes and are dealt with by child protective service agencies. Some victimizations in this category are considered conventional crimes (child sexual abuse) and others, such as neglect, are typically not.

Youth also experience a third category of victimizations, peer victimizations, including what is often called bullying among young children, that is, for the most part considered “non-criminal.” Some of these non-criminal acts which would be considered crimes if they occurred between adults. Because they are less the focus of institutional intervention, there are fewer data systems in the United States that collect information on these non-criminal victimizations. Therefore, the systems reviewed in this document deal primarily with the first two categories of child victimization, conventional crime and child maltreatment. As shown in Table 1, specific professional groups are interested in each category of youth victimization, and while there is some overlap, US data systems focus primarily on one victimization category.

This report reviews some of the main US datasets that provide information on the victimization of children and youth and provides suggestions for improving their data quality, comprehensiveness and utility. Better data are needed to inform the public, support practitioners, give a foundation to basic research, and provide policy directions on this topic of considerable public and professional interest. As classified in Table 2, this document reviews 13 national datasets and suggests limitations and solutions for each: National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS), National Vital Statistics System (NVSS), Supplemental Homicide Report (SHR), National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS), National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), National Incident-based Reporting System (NIBRS), Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS), Juvenile Court Data, National Crime

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Victimization categories</th>
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<td>School administrators, researchers</td>
<td>Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Monitoring the Future Survey, Add Health</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finkelhor and Hashima (2001).

a There is considerable overlap, but these are the data systems that focus primarily on each crime type.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data collection system</th>
<th>Collection agency/organization</th>
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<td>Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)</td>
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<td>In-school student survey</td>
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<td>In-school student survey with mailed follow-up surveys</td>
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<td>National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health)</td>
<td>National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, Carolina Population Center</td>
<td>Assault victimizations</td>
<td>In-school student survey, in-home student survey, parent survey</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Information Center (NCIC), Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), Monitoring the Future, and the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health).

A variety of US data systems provide a window into juvenile victimization, but many are hampered by the fact that they were not designed with this issue as a central focus of attention. While these systems collect valuable data, many were designed with a much broader mandate or to service specific institutions and support their administrative goals and objectives. Several were developed before juvenile victimization was understood as fully as it is now. Some have limitations for this purpose because they cover some restricted domain of the problem based on institutional need, dataset history or other considerations. The seriousness of the juvenile victimization problem, however, urges efforts to overcome these limitations and improve the data.

In this review we focus on the use and improvement of data sets for better data quality and utility for researchers and practitioners. For brevity, we do not outline here the considerable strengths, values, and complex operations of these systems, which are detailed in other publications (see; US Department of Health and Human Services [DHHS]; Administration for Children Youth, and Families, 2001; Maxfield, 1999; National Vital Statistics Program Web site; Rennison, 2000; Sedlak, 2001; Weirsema, Loftin, & McDowall, 2000; Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System Web site; US Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1999; and Youth Behavior Survey Web sites [Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Monitoring the Future Survey, National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health]).

The limitations highlighted here, although they may be serious in terms of the information on juvenile victimization, are often small in light of the considerable virtues of the systems considered as a whole. In fact, many of these systems were not designed with the specific goal of measuring juvenile victimization, so the issues raised in this document are not meant to be criticisms. The data systems in the United States are considerably better developed, as a whole, and are more accessible than those in any other country. But the problems and solutions relevant to them can be of use to those trying to establish systems in other countries or internationally.

In addition, this analysis gives little consideration to cost or feasibility of the solutions proposed to overcome the limitations identified. Some suggestions may be extremely expensive, time consuming for the organizations concerned or may involve problematic changes to the overall systems, for example, by making new data no longer comparable with old data and thus interrupting a time series. Others may be difficult to accomplish, due in part to the initial system designs and civil liberties issues. Many data systems were developed with safeguards to protect the confidentiality of child victims, and any linkages between systems would need to provide equal protection of anonymity. The solutions presented here are made in the spirit of things that would be important for researchers to have if they could possibly be achieved by some means.

The present document grew out of a 2-day meeting convened by the National Consortium on Children, Families and the Law in Washington, DC (December 2000) with support from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. At that meeting, individuals familiar with a number of datasets discussed their strengths and limitations as sources of information on juvenile victimization. Although the limitations reviewed here were offered and discussed by attendees at the seminar, this document is not endorsed by or a product of the group. Rather, the seminar was used as a springboard for this analysis.
National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS)

The National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) is a voluntary national data system created in response to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (PL-93–247). The system is the primary source of information on child abuse and neglect known to child protection service (CPS) agencies. NCANDS collects and analyzes data and consists of two components. The Summary Data Component (SDC) contains data from all states, aggregated at the state level, including information on reports received, investigations, victims, and perpetrators. The Detailed Case Data Component (DCDC) compiles case-level information from child protective service (CPS) agencies in those states capable of electronically submitting data (23 states in 1999). Additional information on the NCANDS system can be found in Child Maltreatment 1999 (US DHHS, Administration for Children, Youth and Families, 2001).

The strengths of the NCANDS are that it provides state-level information compiled on an annual basis and an estimate of the number of children identified by child protection agencies as maltreated by caregivers. NCANDS produces basic statistics on child victims and alleged victims, patterns of service involvement in CPS, comparisons among jurisdictions, and trend analysis. Almost half of the states contribute case-level (DCDC) data.

There are a number of limitations to the system as it currently exists and several options for improving its comprehensiveness, uniformity, and usability.

- Limitation #1: Case-level data are not reported for all states. Case-level data from 1999 contained information from 23 states, encompassing 62% of the US child population (US DHHS, Administration for Children, Youth and Families, 2001). Gaps in state coverage as well as regional gaps (e.g., South and West) make national level analysis of specific subgroups difficult. For example, without national case-level data, it is not possible to analyze the percentage of sexual abuse cases versus physical abuse cases receiving services nationally. Case-level data are necessary for most important policy analysis tasks.

- Solution #1: Resources need to be developed to expedite completing national coverage, for example, providing technical assistance to states in establishing and streamlining their databases. Case-level data collection requires the matching of state child welfare information system data to NCANDS coding elements. State case-level data can be included only after verification of accuracy and completeness. It is expected that when data collection is completed for 2000, NCANDS will contain case-level data from 30 states, encompassing nearly 70% of the child population (Y.-Y. Yuan, personal communication, March 30, 2001). Once a time line has been set for including data from all states, resources should be made available to assist states in data reporting.

- Limitation #2: States’ definitions of important categories are not always comparable. “Medical neglect” is included with general “neglect” in Alaska, but is coded as a unique category for Florida. In Pennsylvania, general neglect is not classified as child maltreatment. As a result, while states’ data systems are matched to meet the NCANDS codes, analysis of state-to-state differences could be misleading. Each state has its own statutes and CPS policies and procedures, which create non-compatible definitions among states.
• Solution #2: State definitions could be analyzed and a core set of categories, on which all states provide data, could be delineated. Aggregate and case-level data should be reported in such a way that these core common categories could be identified, aggregated and compared. Federal legislation may be needed to facilitate additional systemization.

• Limitation #3: Within the aggregate data provided to NCANDS, there is duplication in reporting from some states, as multiple reports may be made regarding the same episode. For example, the rates of child maltreatment in Arizona and Connecticut reflect very different reporting practices. While Arizona categorizes each maltreatment report with only one maltreatment type (the most severe in the incident), Connecticut allows up to eight allegations to be recorded for a child.

• Solution #3: Work with states to establish systems for submitting unduplicated Summary Data Component information and maintaining consistency within and across the system. Ultimately, this would involve standardizing methods of reporting.

• Limitation #4: Information is lacking regarding the outcomes of cases, in part because states often track child maltreatment and foster care outcomes with different data collection systems. While NCANDS reports outcomes in terms of substantiation and post-investigation services, no information is available about foster care placement outcomes or family reunification.

• Solution #4: The NCANDS data collection system could be expanded to provide for updating of case data at a later time when new developments occur and provide incentives for timely updating of such information. Additionally, linking states’ child maltreatment and foster care data collection systems could improve information available regarding case outcomes. Pilot projects could be initiated that track children across systems, while insuring children’s confidentiality. One example would be to track children placed in foster care from NCANDS to AFCARS as a means of outcome evaluation. This linkage could improve states’ abilities to track children as they move through the systems.

• Limitation #5: There is a relative lack of usage of the dataset by states, researchers and child protective service agencies. The information compiled by NCANDS is being used in some national epidemiologic research, and is increasingly being used in individual agency activity and planning. Nevertheless, it is an underutilized resource.

• Solution #5: Encourage use of NCANDS data by researchers and child welfare agencies, as well as publication of analyses using the system. Highlight states that use NCANDS data in state-level analyses and offer technical support to increase this practice. Continue to offer conferences and other opportunities to showcase data usage and research potential. Provide funding for increased data analysis. Encourage use of NCANDS summary data available on the Internet and subsets of DCDC data available through the Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect.

• Limitation #6: NCANDS child abuse and neglect data are not of sufficient quality to be included in the KIDS COUNT publications (see Annie E. Casey Foundation Web site for additional information) created by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Difference
in states’ data collection practices, definitions, and coding practices make state-to-state comparisons of child abuse difficult (Bill O’Hare, Annie E. Casey Foundation, personal communication, 2/08/01). State-to-state comparisons for a variety of other important child indicators are presented in KIDS COUNT and are widely used to monitor child well-being. It would be a strong incentive for policy development in this area if child maltreatment rates could be included.

• Solution #6: In order to have NCANDS data included in KIDS COUNT more attention will need to be given to data collection, definitional consistency and coding uniformity. This may require standardized definitions across states, regular data auditing and financial incentives for compliance. Creating this standardized system of data collection, definitions, and coding may not be possible without standardizing some elements of states’ CPS practice.

• Limitation #7: The NCANDS data allow for limited combination with other administrative data. Analysis at the county level is possible currently with some state data, but it would be very valuable to be able to combine aggregate child abuse data with data on demographics, economics, crime, and infrastructure at a wide variety of levels.

• Solution #7: This could be remedied by adding limited locational codes to facilitate cross-analysis with census data, NIBRS data, and other administrative data sources.

• Limitation #8: We have little information regarding the accuracy of NCANDS data. There may be inaccuracies and incompatibilities between administrative data submitted for NCANDS reporting and actual information in case files. As a result, it is difficult to know which data items are most representative of actual case records.

• Solution #8: Encourage state departments to monitor systems for submission accuracy, make state systems more compatible with national data requirements and support research aimed at empirically examining the accuracy of NCANDS administrative data. Additionally, provide extended training for caseworkers regarding data submission.

Child fatality homicide data

Three major data systems track child fatality and homicide data: The Center for Disease Control’s National Vital Statistics System (NVSS), the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s (FBI) Supplemental Homicide Report (SHR), and the NCANDS system. Each of these data collection systems was designed to provide specific agency information.

All three of these recording systems include data on child fatalities, although each has a unique focus. The NVSS contains child death information collected from death certificates. The SHR includes all child deaths reported by law enforcement as homicides. The NCANDS system includes data on children killed by caretakers (child maltreatment fatalities). While there may be overlap between these three data collection systems, each uses different evidentiary criteria and collects data for a specific purpose.

The National Center on Child Fatality Review provides a model for possible integration of child fatality statistics. This organization publishes a newsletter (Unified Response) and its
Web site provides a 50 state comparison using data collected from the SHR, the CDC (NVSS) and state NCANDS (National Center on Child Fatality Review, 2000).

**Supplemental Homicide Report (SHR)/FBI**

Law enforcement agencies report information on homicides to the FBI on a yearly basis through Supplemental Homicide Reports, a component of the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) that collects additional information on homicides (US Department of Justice (2001)–Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Uniform Crime Report*). Thus, the SHR database contains information on all homicides known to police. It contains incident-level data on victims, offenders, circumstances, relationships between victims and offenders and other information.

- **Limitation #1:** The SHR dataset includes those child fatalities classified as homicides by police at the time that the SHR form is completed. There may be neglect cases (i.e., when parents fail to provide necessary medical care), which are unlikely to be reported by law enforcement as homicide unless parental negligence can be determined at the time of the report.
- **Solution #1:** Consider adding results of investigation, including a place for coding of child abuse and neglect determination and homicide. In cases of parental negligence, encourage coding of child abuse and neglect outcomes after conclusion of an investigation. Another suggestion for counting of child maltreatment homicides is to encourage states to coordinate reporting efforts with child protection or other local agencies. This effort is underway in many states through the use of Child Fatality Review Teams. Additional information and a national directory of Child Fatality Review Teams are available on the National Center on Child Fatality Review Web site (National Directory of Child Fatality Review Teams Web site).

- **Limitation #2:** There are state-to-state differences in which child maltreatment deaths are classified as homicide. Some states have an “intent law” in which intent is assumed in child maltreatment deaths and these are therefore classified as homicides (Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2001).
- **Solution #2:** This limitation could be addressed by providing training regarding how to handle child maltreatment fatalities for all those who complete the SHR submissions. Another option would be to identify core definitions of child homicide for use by all states in SHR reporting. A national model definition could be implemented, and states and cases that match the definition could be coded. This would facilitate state-to-state comparison. A final suggestion could be for the SHR to include state-specific information related to differences in child homicide classification. States that have an “intent law” could be identified as such in the data system.

- **Limitation #3:** Important categories relevant to child homicide are missing from the SHR circumstance code. Codes directly related to child homicide circumstances are not included.
- **Solution #3:** Add categories such as abduction/kidnapping to the circumstance codes.
• Limitation #4: In the personal weapon variable, which covers deaths caused by the use of hands, feet, or other body parts, several different kinds of child maltreatment activities are lumped together that could be differentiated.
• Suggestion: Add categories such as “shaken,” “exposure,” “dropped,” and “thrown.”

National Vital Statistics System (NVSS)/Center for Disease Control (CDC)

The Center for Disease Control NVSS provides data on overt child maltreatment fatalities, as well as other child homicides. A death is considered as a child maltreatment fatality, if the cause of death on the death certificate is listed as child battering (E967), neglect (E904, E968.4) or child homicide (E960-E969.9) (Center for Disease Control, 2001). A standard death certificate is recommended for states by the National Center for Health Statistics (Mortality Data from the National Vital Statistics System Web site), but use of the form varies by state (Thomas Simon, Center for Disease Control, personal communication, 8/20/01). Vital statistics are listed for each child on the death certificate. These statistics include child age, sex, race, cause of death, place of death (state), manner of death, and date of death (year).

• Limitation #1: Coding of child fatalities on death certificates may not reflect actual rates of child maltreatment homicide. Certifiers (medical examiners and coroners) are provided space to indicate manner and multiple causes of death on death certificates, but may or may not be able to evaluate intent. In order to record the child death as a maltreatment homicide, the certifier must be able to judge if the death was accidental or intentional (Weirsema et al., 2000). If a child dies of drowning, the certifier may not know whether the death was accidental or intentional when the death certificate is completed.
• Solution #1: When possible, coordinate completion of child fatality death certificates with a Child Fatality Review Team. This coordination could assist certifiers in correctly classifying child maltreatment homicides as such.

Additional solutions relate to the CDC’s proposed National Violent Death Reporting System (Simon, 2000), which would include uniform definitions, and death certificate data supplemented with information from other sources (medical examiner, police, and crime lab). One option would be to include Child Fatality Review Teams in this model. A second option would be to create a new system specifically for child fatality reporting. This system would use information from multiple data sources to try to arrive at a conclusive coding. The Child Fatality Review Boards in each state would work to provide information for this reporting system. This system could include violent and non-violent child deaths, and could include extensive codes for elements involving child abuse and neglect. This would allow for tracking of child homicides due to non-violent means (such as failure to thrive and medical neglect). This system could include detail about place of child death and receive information from multiple sources.

• Limitation #2: No victim–offender relationship information is available. As a result of this limitation, it is not possible to identify the victim–offender relationship, even in child maltreatment deaths.
• Solution #2: Allow for relationship coding on death certificates in cases of inflicted injury or negligence.

• Limitation #3: The aggregate data available for analysis on child maltreatment deaths are not case-based. While state-level data on child mortality are available through the CDC Web site’s WISQARS (Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting) and WONDER data systems, no case-level data are available (Center for Disease Control Wonder Web site).
• Solution #3: Make case-level data available for analysis.

National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS)

The NCANDS database (see previous section for general information) also contains information on child homicides.

• Limitation #1: Lack of investigative coordination may result in undercounting of child maltreatment homicides. In some states, child maltreatment deaths are reported directly to law enforcement and are never included in the CPS data files.
• Solution #1: State coordination of data collection is encouraged and supported by NCANDS. In addition, individual states may be able to improve child maltreatment reporting using Child Fatality Review Teams or other efforts at interagency (law enforcement, medical personnel, child protection) cooperation. Child Fatality Review Teams could examine all child fatalities in each state, referring any involving child maltreatment fatalities to CPS for statistical inclusion.

• Limitation #2: There is no uniform approach to collecting child maltreatment homicide data. Nevada and several other states submit data collected by Child Fatality Review Teams, Georgia uses an internal reporting source, Kansas includes only those deaths reported to Child Protective Services, and Maryland uses the number of child fatality reports provided to the Social Services Administration rather than the state automated data system (US DHHS, Administration for Children, Youth and Families, 2000).
• Solution #2: Encourage state use of Child Fatality Review Teams or other interagency systems to obtain accurate child maltreatment homicide data collection.

National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS)

The National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS) is a special purpose study conducted at irregular intervals that provides national estimates of the number of abused and neglected children known to professionals. The NIS collects data from child protective service agencies, as well as from “non-CPS sentinels” in law enforcement, medical services, education, and other services (mental heath, day care, voluntary social services), who come into contact with maltreated children (Sedlak & Broadhurst, 1996).
The NIS classifies child maltreatment as falling under either the *Harm Standard* or the *Endangerment Standard*. The *Harm Standard* includes only those children who experience demonstrable harm. The *Endangerment Standard* includes children identified under the *Harm Standard*, as well as children thought to have been endangered by maltreatment.

- **Limitation #1**: Although the NIS attempts to obtain information about cases of unreported child maltreatment, it taps only cases known to professionals, and may miss maltreated children unknown to CPS and non-CPS sentinels (Sedlak, Bruce, & Schultz, 2001). It does not identify cases known only to non-professionals or family members, including victims and offenders.
- **Solution #1**: Household-based samples could be included to improve coverage. The households could be randomly selected from the counties included in the study.
- **Limitation #2**: Infants and preschool children may be underrepresented in the study, since those groups have fewer interactions with important classes of non-CPS sentinels (i.e., schools).
- **Solution #2**: A household-based sample could improve representation of this age group by including relatives, friends and others who may be aware of maltreatment, but may not report it to CPS or non-CPS sentinels.
- **Limitation #3**: Limited information is collected. Information related to family circumstance, duration of abuse, and previous interventions is not included.
- **Solution #3**: Explore new methods to expand the information collected.
- **Limitation #4**: Non-CPS sentinels are not asked if CPS was notified of incidents of child maltreatment. As a result, this information has to be inferred by checking to see if the case reported by the sentinel was known to CPS. This makes it impossible to determine whether lack of CPS knowledge about a case reflects non-reporting by sentinels or non-response by CPS.
- **Solution #4**: Include information from sentinels related to reports they or others in their agency made to CPS. This information could be used to assess the non-CPS sentinel knowledge of reporting, as well as providing information related to non-reporting (by sentinel) versus non-response (by CPS). The categories could be as follows:
  
  Incident reported to CPS by
  
  1. This agency
  2. Other agency
  3. Unknown
  4. Incident not reported
- **Limitation #5**: Information about cases screened out of investigation by CPS is not collected from CPS agencies, sometimes because it is not maintained. Cases may be screened out of CPS investigation for a variety of reasons, such as if the reported incident does not meet legal definitions of child abuse or neglect, if there is insufficient information to proceed, or if the perpetrator is not a caregiver (Downing & Wells, 1990). Screen-outs may be a major reason for lack of CPS knowledge about a case in NIS, but the dynamics of this are not covered in the current NIS methodology.
• Solution #5: Collect this information from CPS agencies. CPS agencies may be willing to maintain this information and increase their record keeping related to screen-outs during participation in the study. Gather case information regarding screen-outs, including reasons for not initiating an assessment in those cases.

• Limitation #6: The NIS only contains information related to maltreatment by caretakers. This excludes large categories of serious offenses against children.

• Solution #6: The NIS methodology could be used to identify a broader range of juvenile victimizations, including peer victimizations and victimizations by other non-caretaker adults. If the NIS was to be co-funded by the Department of Justice or the Department of Education, a more comprehensive screening analysis could be justified.

• Limitation #7: The sampling stratification does not allow for state-level analysis. The NIS sample includes information from only 42 counties nationally, and does not include complete representation from any one state.

• Solution #7: Use a NIS methodology in individual states and encourage replication of this model in other states.

• Limitation #8: NIS is expensive and consumes a large part of federal child maltreatment research expenditure, while providing answers to only a restricted number of questions. Other studies are not combined (do not “piggy back”) with the NIS.

• Solution #8: Allow other studies to take a closer look at these populations by having studies “piggy back” on NIS.

• Limitation #9: Availability of NIS data are limited. Access to NIS data are limited to three public use files available through the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect (National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect).

• Solution #9: Make data set extract files available for simple data analysis on a NIS Web site.

• Additional issue: Future NIS studies will need to address changes in CPS service provision. Many states are moving away from a standard model of investigation and substantiation through CPS and adopting alternative systems (US DHHS, Administration for Children, Youth and Families, Children’s Bureau, Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, May 2001).

National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)

The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) is an annual survey of households and household members. The NCVS is based on a very large nationally representative household sample and collects data on non-fatal crime experiences. Data are collected on the household and individual level (household members age 12 and over) and provide information about victims, offenders and criminal offenses (Rennison, 2000).

The 1999 NCVS sample included over 42,000 households and more than 77,000 individuals age 12 or older. Analysis of NCVS data finds that youth ages 12–17 experience rates of violent victimization two or three times that of adults (Hashima & Finkelhor, 1999).
Limitation #1: Children under age 12 experience substantial victimization that is not currently collected by the NCVS. Studies have shown that between 12% and 32% of children under 12 have been victims of assault (Freeman, Mokros, & Poznanski, 1993; Martin, Gordon, & Kupersmidt, 1995; Richters & Martinez, 1993). Several national studies (Finkelhor & Dziuba-Leatherman, 1995; Finkelhor, Hotaling, & Sedlak, 1990; Finkelhor, Mitchell, & Wolak, 2000) have interviewed children down to age 10 regarding victimizations. Children’s testimonial abilities (down to age 4) have been shown to be more than 90% accurate in self-reports, especially when appropriate interviewing techniques are used (Carter, Bottoms, & Levin, 1996; Peterson & Bell, 1996; Steward, Bussey, Goodman, & Saywitz, 1993).

Solution #1: Include children under age 12 as respondents in the survey, and collect proxy information from parent/caretakers related to crimes against children too young to be interviewed directly.

Limitation #2: Provision is made for confidential interviewing of juveniles, but interviewing rules, while encouraging privacy, do not make it a requirement. Youth may be reluctant to report crimes within the family or those crimes they do not want families to know about (Finkelhor & Ormrod, 1999; Wells & Rankin, 1995).

Solution #2: Support research on improving disclosures by youth participants.

Limitation #3: Young people may be less likely than adults to think of their victimizations as crimes or more likely to misinterpret NCVS questions in other ways (Wells & Rankin, 1995).

Solution #3: Support studies of how to improve youth response. This may include research regarding the impact of wording, vocabulary and preambles to make it clear to youth that the survey may ask about events they may not think of as crimes. This may assist in capturing issues youth are unlikely to report.

Limitation #4: The questions in the NCVS may not be fully understood by children. The wording of some questions may pose comprehension problems even for youth ages 12–13.

Solution #4: Assess comprehension level of the survey and make any necessary improvements.

Limitation #5: Thefts and property crimes against juveniles are underreported, because information on some types of theft (those occurring in and around the home) is primarily gathered from the “household respondent” (primary adult). This differs from information on thefts of property away from home, which is primarily obtained from each respondent. Since much of property crime is treated as household crime and not connected to any individual, in situations where household items are stolen, they are related to the household, when in reality they may be the possession of one household member. If a vehicle is stolen from a garage, it is not possible to determine if it belonged to an adult or juvenile household member. In addition, this household crime classification makes it difficult to compare classes of people (such as juveniles and adults) in terms of property crime victimization.
• Solution #5: The relationship between property owner (Incident Question 97) and property stolen (Incident Question 96) could be clarified by adding response options related to property ownership (US Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000). For example, if the household respondent reported a property theft, they would be asked to enumerate all persons affected by the property theft (or when possible, to provide information regarding ownership/personal control of the property).

• Limitation #6: The NCVS does not collect information related to child abductions in the course of violent crimes, although abduction of children and youth is a major public policy concern.

• Solution #6: Include additional questions to the Incident questionnaire that ask respondents if they have been (1) forcibly taken into a building, vehicle or a distance of 20 ft or more or (2) forcibly detained for a period of at least a half hour in the course of the assault. An alternative solution would be to include this and other missing and abducted children issues as a periodic NCVS supplement (D. Finkelhor, S. Hamby & R. Ormrod, review of NCVS questions, letter to Jan Chaiken, Bureau of Justice Statistics, June 2000).

• Limitation #7: Understanding reasons for non-reporting is an important goal of the NCVS, and understanding of non-reporting of crime by juveniles is hampered in the NCVS (D. Finkelhor, S. Hamby & R. Ormrod, review of NCVS questions, letter to Jan Chaiken, Bureau of Justice Statistics, June 2000). NCVS Incident Question #117 (US Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000) provides information on respondent’s reasons for not reporting to police, but is limited in the analysis it will support. Specifically, the question does not allow comparisons between those who report to police and those who do not. In addition, some of the categories seem ambiguous and conceptually problematic. One example of this limitation is the response category “child offender(s)/kid stuff.” This response may be interpreted in several ways, such as “I did not report it because the offenders were juveniles” or “I did not report it because the incident was of minor importance.”

• Solutions #7: First, interviewers could read a specific list of reasons for not reporting to respondents. In this way, more systematic data could be compiled and examined for changes over time. Second, the reasons for not reporting could be based on a more developed framework of reasons for not reporting to police. Third, certain identical questions could be asked of both those who reported and did not report, so the groups could be compared. For example, all respondents could be asked questions of the format: “At the time the incident occurred (and prior to any police reporting), did you think that police might blame you for what happened?”

National Incident-based Reporting System (NIBRS)

The National Incident-based Reporting System (NIBRS) is an administrative database, contributed to on a voluntary basis by law enforcement agencies. The FBI maintains the database as a component of its Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, and encourages
agencies to participate. NIBRS data are collected at the incident level, and reflect crimes committed against individuals, businesses, and society as a whole. The NIBRS database is projected to be national in scope in the future and 21 states are currently NIBRS certified (Search Organization, 2001). The system contains a fair amount of detailed information about crimes known to police in states reporting to NIBRS and provides a window on juvenile justice not currently available through other data systems.

Finkelhor and Ormrod analyzed 1997 NIBRS data from 12 states and found that juvenile victims make up 12% of all crime victims known to police (Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2000). In 1997, 78% of all sex crime victims and 38% of all kidnapping victims reported to police were children (Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2000). The details it provides include information on crimes, injuries, offenders, age, rate and gender of victim.

• Limitation #1: NIBRS provides limited national coverage. Since it is a voluntary, law enforcement based reporting system, not all states participate. Despite limited financial incentives and administrative support for data system transfer to NIBRS, some states have not yet adopted NIBRS reporting. As a result, interpretation of NIBRS data may be a reflection of the demographic composition of NIBRS certified jurisdictions rather than actual victim demographic composition.

• Solution #1: Continue to encourage states to adopt NIBRS reporting. This may require increased documentation regarding the benefits of NIBRS participation, including evidence that NIBRS data collection will meet the needs of localities and states. In addition, allocate additional funding to provide states with support for data system transfers so that more states can adopt NIBRS reporting. This funding could be in the form of incentives, such as technical assistance to arrange for current data systems to map more readily into NIBRS.

• Limitation #2: The NIBRS coding makes no designation of offenders as caretakers or non-caretakers in incidents when victims are children. This makes it difficult to judge whether something would qualify formally as a child maltreatment episode where the offender was a caretaker, relative or some other known offender other than a parent.

• Solution #2: Include a category in the offender coding. This could be a question such as, “Is the offender a primary caretaker of the victim?”

• Limitation #3: NIBRS contains very little information about the interrelationships between law enforcement and CPS agencies. As a result, it is not possible to know which cases CPS referred to the police or which police reported to CPS.

• Solution #3: This information could be noted at the source level, as well as at the disposition level. Receipt of a case from CPS could be noted at the source level. Referrals made to CPS could be identified through the addition of codes similar to those used for “Disposition of arrestee under 18.” For “Disposition of arrestee,” choices are “H: Handled within department (released to parents, released with warning)” or “R: Referred to other authorities (juvenile court, probation, etc.).” A similar coding, for “Disposition of victim under 18,” indicating cases referred to CPS could be included.

• Limitation #4: The NIBRS offense categories miss some important types of child victimization that police may investigate, but not code because no codes are currently
designated. For example, information regarding arrests for “Nonviolent Family Offenses” (which includes neglect and failure to protect) is recorded as a Type B offense, which means that only arrestee data are collected. As a result, no information is collected on victims.

- Solution #4: Categories such as “neglect” and “failure to protect” could be added as offense categories, which would increase the amount of information available regarding “Nonviolent Family Offenses.”

- Limitation #5: The NIBRS data provide limited information about some disposition issues that are important to know about with child victims. It is not possible to determine if police directly interviewed a child victim, or to identify whether the child was referred to victim services.

- Solution #5: Include “Disposition of Child Victim” data item, similar to the “Disposition of victim under age 18” data item, with categories such as:

  - Police interviewed Child
  - Child was interviewed ___ times
  - Case was accepted for prosecution
  - Referral was made to victim services

- Limitation #6: NIBRS does not include some specific weapon classifications related to child victimization, particularly child maltreatment. The “personal weapons” category includes any incident involving the use of hands, feet, or other body parts as weapons.

- Solution #6: Allow for specific classifications within the “personal weapons” category, such as shaken, dropped, thrown etc.

- Limitation #7: Juvenile-specific location codes that are most useful for analyzing juvenile victimization are not included in NIBRS.

- Solution #7: Under “location type,” descriptors relevant to juveniles, such as those location codes used in the NCVS, could be included. Ormrod (2000) has suggested the following codes for additional locations:
  - Own home
  - Near own home
  - In/near friend’s house
  - In/near relative’s house
  - Inside school
  - On school property
  - On public transportation

- Limitation #8: Property descriptors do not include items frequently used by youth.

- Solution #8: Include property descriptors similar to those used in the NCVS, such as (Ormrod, 2000):
  - Portable electronic and photo gear
  - Collections (coin, card)
  - Luggage, briefcase (book bags, backpacks)
  - Toys, sports and recreation equipment
Limitation #9: Victim–offender relationship codes in NIBRS do not include relationships specific to juvenile victimization.

Solution #9: Include victim–offender categories such as (Ormrod, 2000):
  - Ex-boyfriend, girlfriend
  - Schoolmate
  - Roommate
  - Workmate (co-worker)

Limitation #10: NIBRS only includes circumstance codes for selected offenses (aggravated assault/murder, negligent manslaughter, justifiable homicide and additional justifiable homicide). Circumstance codes are not provided for sex offenses, simple assaults or kidnapping.

Solution #10: Allow existing circumstance codes to be used for sex offenses, simple assaults and kidnapping. Add special circumstance codes for kidnapping as follows (Ormrod, 2000):

**Kidnapping Circumstances (allow several) Codes:**
- 01 = Drug dealing/Involvement
- 02 = Gangland
- 03 = Juvenile Gang Involvement
- 04 = Lovers’ Quarrel
- 05 = Custody Issues
- 06 = Ransom
- 07 = Hostage
- 08 = Intimidation
- 09 = Other, unknown, and so forth.

**Additional Kidnapping Circumstances (further variables)**

I. Victim transport/movement (yes/no)
   a. Initial location type (use “location type” codes)
   b. First subsequent location
   c. Second subsequent location

II. Kidnap Duration Codes:
- 01 = Short Time (up to several hours)
- 02 = All Day
- 03 = Overnight
- 04 = Multiple Days
- 05 = Week or More

**Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS)**

The Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) is a mandatory, federal data collection system, which began collecting data in October of 1994. Data are collected on all children under the responsibility of State Title IV-B/E agencies and therefore include all children in foster care (i.e., those children under 24-hour substitute care placed
away from their parents or guardians by the State Title IV agency (Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System).

Many, but not all, of the children in the foster care system are there as a result of parental maltreatment. In 1999, 72% of children entering care during the year were victims of physical abuse, sexual abuse and/or neglect (Rossman, 2000). The AFCARS database includes demographic information (age, race/ethnicity), lengths of stay, placement settings, case goals, placement outcomes, circumstances associated with child’s removal, and other data regarding children in foster care.

- **Limitation #1:** It is not possible to link children as they move through the AFCARS system. Cases cannot be tracked across years’ data, so it is not possible to follow children through the foster care system.
- **Solution #1:** Enhance the data collection system in such a way that children’s experiences while in foster care can be tracked using AFCARS.
- **Limitation #2:** The AFCARS system is not linked to any other child maltreatment data system. Thus the experience of children in foster care cannot be linked with detailed information about maltreatment, family of origin, history of reports on child and other variables. This information would contribute to understanding which victimized children are in foster care and what happens to them once there.
- **Solution #2:** Link the AFCARS system with NCANDS in order to track maltreatment and trajectory of children already in the child protection system.

**Juvenile and Family Court Data**

Large amounts of data from juvenile courts are collected and integrated to provide national information about the extent and characteristics of juvenile delinquency and the disposition of delinquents within the juvenile justice system. These same juvenile and family courts also handle a substantial number of child abuse and neglect cases. However, information on the dispositions on these cases is rarely summarized at the state level and is not available anywhere in a national database.

NCANDS currently reports whether a child abuse or neglect case is referred to court and whether a child is removed from the home, but courts make complicated and progressive decisions in child abuse and neglect cases. These decisions include foster care placements, access limitations, treatment services, and terminations of parental rights. These decisions, their timing and their sequencing have rarely been studied and are almost completely unavailable for policymaker consideration. The fact that these same courts provide detailed information on offenders and their disposition suggests that the potential exists for equivalent kinds of information on child abuse and neglect cases, but this potential has not been realized (Howard Snyder, personal communication, March 2001).

- **Limitation #1:** Juvenile Court Data provide detailed data on juvenile offenders but almost none on juvenile victims.
- **Solution #1:** Court systems could provide information on juvenile victims from juvenile and family court actions in child abuse and neglect cases.
• Limitation #2: Juvenile and Family Court Data are not linked with other child welfare system data.
• Solution #2: Ideally, information on juvenile court actions in child abuse and neglect cases could be collected and reported in such a way that it would be part of the detailed case child welfare data of the sort being collected by NCANDS. This linkage could ultimately be achieved through some expansion of the NCANDS detailed case data system to include juvenile court dispositions. If the court system developed an independent data system, that system could have some kinds of identifiers allowing linkage to NCANDS type detailed case data. If data from the court system, NCANDS, and AFCARS allowed tracking over years, this would give a full, detailed picture of a case and its outcomes as it progressed through a system.

Currently, possibilities need to be explored at the level of individual states to see whether and how states have the court data linked to or integrated with the other child protection system data. Then larger systems integrating multiple states could potentially be built up on the capabilities that exist within the states.

National Crime Information Center

The National Crime Information Center (NCIC) is an information center used by criminal justice agencies since 1967. The NCIC organizes information into 17 databases, including stolen articles, gang and terrorist members, stolen vehicles and missing persons. An improved NCIC 2000 became effective in July 1999, and introduced possibilities for adding additional services to the NCIC. The new system can search right index finger prints, match mug shots and identify sexual offenders in law enforcement agencies with the equipment to take advantage of these capabilities (US Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1999).

The NCIC is primarily used by criminal justice agencies to make inquiries and obtain information regarding crimes and criminals. The FBI describes NCIC objectives as including “apprehending fugitives, locating missing persons, locating and returning missing property, as well as in the protection of the law enforcement officers encountering the individuals described in the system” (US Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1999).

The missing person file of the NCIC is used by The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), a clearinghouse for missing and abducted children (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children Web site). The NCMEC is a private, non-profit organization working with law enforcement agencies on cases of missing and abducted children. The NCMEC’s Case Analysis and Support Division uses NCIC data to make comparative matches between missing and unidentified juveniles (Bud Gaylord, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, personal communication, March 13, 2001).

The NCIC missing person file contains six categories of missing persons, juveniles, endangered persons, involuntary persons, catastrophe victims, and others. The majority of missing youth are identified in the juvenile category, although some may be categorized as endangered or involuntary, depending on law enforcement report detail. Law enforcement personnel are required to report missing children immediately and to document physical description,
information regarding last sighting and other specifics. The cases entered into NCIC include short-term runaways who may return to home or arrive at a shelter soon after being reported missing.

The NCMEC estimates that 80–90% of individuals recorded as missing at any given time are juveniles, and reports an average of between 750,000 and 900,000 missing children a year (Bud Gaylord, NCMEC, personal communication, March 13, 2001).

- Limitation #1: The NCIC is an obvious resource for recording the number of missing and exploited children. This resource is untapped, since NCIC data are not available for research or analysis. The database is available only to criminal justice agencies and the NCMEC.
  
  Solution #1: Explore whether aspects of the NCIC could be tapped for research purposes. In addition, allow and encourage agencies with access to NCIC data (NCMEC and other criminal justice agencies) to produce research based on this data source.

- Limitation #2: The NCIC does not systematically separate juvenile missing persons from adults. Most juvenile victims are entered in the “Juvenile” file, but some are included in the “Endangered” and “Involuntary” files. These files include both adults and juveniles.
  
  Solution #2: Provide a clear identifier for juvenile missing persons in the “Endangered” or “Involuntary” files.

- Limitation #3: There is a relative lack of clarity regarding categories of missing children, since non-family and family abductions, runaways and other missing children are all recorded in the “Juvenile” file. As a result, it is difficult to gauge variations and trends in missing persons reports.
  
  Solution #3: Provide categories similar to those used in National Incidence Study of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children (NISMART) to better map missing child definitions (Finkelhor et al., 1990). NISMART categories are: runaway/thrownaway, non-family abduction, family abduction, missing, involuntarily lost and injured, missing benign explanation (Sedlak, Finkelhor, Hammer & Schultz, 2002).

- Limitation #4: Although law enforcement officials are directed to immediately investigate and enter all cases of missing children, delays or omissions may occur due to policy or supervision issues.
  
  Solution #4: Add incentives for increased law enforcement system participation.

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**Youth behavior surveys**

Three national youth behavior surveys, The *Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)*, the *Monitoring the Future Survey*, and the *National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health)*, are available for analysis by researchers. These surveys are designed with a specific focus on youth and are based on self-reports of their experiences. The surveys provide an estimate of youth perception of safety, crime victimization, and other variables related to adolescent risk and well-being. Wells and Rankin (1995) found that these youth surveys provide
higher juvenile victimization rates than the NCVS and suggest that they may provide a more reliable representation of youth.

The YRBS is coordinated by the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (Youth Risk Behavior Survey Web site). It includes questions related to school safety and adolescent risk behaviors. The Center for Disease Control’s Monitoring the Future Survey surveys high school students, college students and young adults on an annual basis (Monitoring the Future Web site). In addition, follow-up questionnaires are sent to a sample of high school graduates for several years after they take the survey. The Carolina Population Center and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development fund the Add Health study (National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health Web site). Add Health administers a school-based survey as well as two in-home interviews with adolescents.

• Limitation #1: All three adolescent surveys provide basic information regarding youth risk, although some questions in the surveys are ambiguous. For example, one question asks “How many times were you in a physical fight,” with a follow-up question about whether the fight resulted in an injury. These two questions allow researchers to assess injuries related to fights, but do not allow analysis of whether the student was a victim or offender (Youth Risk Behavior Survey Web site).
• Solution #1: Structure survey questions in such a way that youth can report whether they were victims or offenders in fights and other incidents.

• Limitation #2: Questions are not mapped to crime contexts or perpetrator information. Some questions relate specifically to school-based incidents, but other questions leave out crime context information. For example, the Youth Risk Behavior Survey asks students, “Have you ever been forced to have sexual intercourse when you did not want to?” Student responses do not provide information on whether these incidents occurred in school or at home, or whether a peer, adult, acquaintance or a stranger forced the student.
• Solution #2: Include crime contexts and perpetrator information in questions related to juvenile victimization.

Multi-system concerns

Exposure to domestic violence

• Limitation: Data are lacking in almost all systems about the number of children exposed to domestic violence and their characteristics. This is an increasingly important public policy concern that falls outside the current purview of the data systems.
• Solution: Many of the data systems could make changes that would gather important data on these children. For example, NCANDS could include domestic violence exposure in data collection instruments.

In this way, the presence of domestic violence would be flagged in cases of child maltreatment. Similarly, the NCVS, which gathers self-reports from victims of domestic violence, could include questions related to children’s exposure to this violence. NIBRS police data about domestic violence incidents could include information regarding children’s presence in
the households where such incidents occur. Finally, youth behavior surveys (YRBS, Monitoring the Future, Add Health) could add questions about youth exposure to incidents of domestic violence within their families.

Use of technology

An additional multi-system concern relates to the use of technology. First, none of the technology used by these data collection systems is web-based (for data entry or retrieval). Second, in many states, the technology currently being used with administrative data systems is obsolete. Finally, these systems collect limited (if any) information regarding on-line juvenile victimization. Information regarding Internet victimization could be added to NIBRS reporting forms, NCVS questionnaires, and youth behavior surveys. These additions would assist researchers, law enforcement agencies, and others in gathering information regarding juvenile on-line victimization.

Conclusion

There is a need for improvement of statistics on juvenile victimization given the seriousness and frequency of the problem. In addition to thinking about specific shortcomings related to existing data systems, it may also be valuable to have a broader perspective and look at the big picture of what we would like to know. This perspective could suggest improvements to systems, as well as possible creation of new data systems or hybrids of existing systems.

The suggested changes could help practitioners, policy makers, researchers, and the general public. They could help answer currently unresolved questions about incidence, epidemiology and program impact. For example, practitioners in child protective services could benefit from improved data on children’s trajectories within the child protection and adoption systems to find out how investigations influence ultimate outcomes. Collecting NCVS victimization information about children under the age of 12 might give considerable new public salience to this problem. The suggested improvements could provide policy direction and a foundation for general research in the area of juvenile victimization.

The proposed changes are typically not simple to make, nor are they inexpensive. It is also not easy to decide which deserve priority. In assessing the relative importance of various changes, things that need to be assessed include the importance of the problems and policies that could be influenced by the new data, the number and variety of users of the new data, and the cost and other possible drawbacks of the changes.

Unfortunately, the data systems discussed here are not for the most part managed in any coordinated way. The people involved with these data systems do not come from the same field or federal agency. One method of setting priorities and generally improving the data systems is to bring together users and managers of different data sets as well as people from different fields such as criminologists, social workers, public health professionals and others in part to learn from other systems. A way to proceed may be to work with the interagency task force on “Integrating Federal Statistics on Children” (National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council, 1995) and other organizations to develop more conferences, focus groups,
task forces and other opportunities for people in different systems to come together and apply lessons from each other’s work.

Many observers have previously commented on the problems identified in this report. The US Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect (1990) recommended improved coordination to improve research related to child abuse and neglect. In 1993, the National Research Council, 1993 suggested improvements in state-level data collection. A 1995 report by the US Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect (1995) noted problems of “misclassification and misdiagnosis” related to child maltreatment homicides (p. xxviii). It can only be hoped that with time the weight of these various pleas will translate into concerted action.

Acknowledgments

The authors wish to thank Kelly Foster for her assistance in preparing the manuscript, as well as a number of individuals who reviewed drafts of this document. Thanks to Cynthia Barnett, Bud Gaylord, Sue Limber, Richard Ormrod, Michael Rand, Andrea Sedlak, Thomas Simon and Ying-Ying Yuan, and the members of the Family Violence Research Seminar (Spring 2001).

References


**Résumé**

**Objectif:** Proposer des améliorations pour 13 ensembles et systèmes de données qui collectent des informations sur les jeunes victimes américaines.

**Méthode:** Les suggestions parviennent de plusieurs sources, y compris les usagers des systèmes de données et ceux qui les gèrent. De plus, une session spéciale sur le sujet en question a été convoquée par le National Consortium on Children, Families and the Law, à Washington en décembre 2000.

**Résultats:** Des améliorations clés ont été proposées et des solutions offertes, pour chacun des 13 systèmes de données américains.

**Conclusions:** Cet article recommande trois grandes classes d’améliorations ciblant un bon nombre de systèmes de données. D’abord, les systèmes pourraient élargir leurs cadres pour incorporer un plus grand nombre de juridictions ou autres segments de la population. Deuxièmement, afin d’être plus complets et plus adaptés aux agressions visant les enfants, les systèmes devront produire des types de données, des questions ou des catégories de réponses qui soient plus spécifiques. Enfin, les systèmes devront être modifiés pour assurer une continuité et une cohérence entre les systèmes, soit en utilisant les mêmes définitions ou en associant les divers systèmes pour mieux suivre les enfants d’un système à l’autre.

**Resumen**

**Objetivo:** Sugerir mejoras en 13 sistemas de organización de datos que recogen información sobre la victimización juvenil en los U.S.A.
Método: Las sugerencias fueron recopiladas a través de una variedad de fuentes incluyendo usuarios y administradores de sistemas de organización de datos así como durante la celebración de una reunión especial sobre el tema organizada por el National Consortium on Children, Families and the Law en Washington, DC (Diciembre de 2000).

Resultados: Se identificaron las áreas claves de mejora para cada uno de los 13 sistemas y se identificaron posibles soluciones.

Conclusiones: Este artículo sugiere tres amplias categorías de mejora que se pueden aplicar a un cierto número de sistemas de organización de datos. Primero, los sistemas de daros pueden ampliar su cobertura para incluir más jurisdicciones y otros segmentos de la población. Segundo, para ser más específico y comprehensivo en relación con la victimización infantil, los sistemas necesitan crear más ítems, preguntas o categorías de respuestas. Finalmente, los sistemas de datos necesitan ser modificados para proporcionar una mayor continuidad e interrelación entre los sistemas, lo que implica utilizar definiciones uniformes o integrar los sistemas de manera que se facilite que los mismos niños puedan ser recogidos a través de diferentes sistemas.