

Tip of the Iceberg

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Most national statistics rely on substantiated reports of sexual abuse to official social service agencies. The American Academy of Pediatrics did a study by asking mothers about knowledge of sexual abuse their children had experienced, even though it is well established that sexual abuse often goes undiscovered even by mothers. Based on mothers' responses, the study concluded that for every 1 child substantiated as a victim of sexual abuse, greater than 15 have experienced sexual victimization in some form. Cases brought to the attention of social service authorities often represent cases where evidence of abuse is clear.

These results are further evidence that official statistics represent a small proportion of actual victims.