

# Child Maltreatment and Crime: New Evidence from a Sample of Twins

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## **Abstract**

Child maltreatment is a major social problem. This study measures the effects of child maltreatment on crime using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health). We focus on crime because it is one of the most costly potential outcomes of maltreatment. Our work addresses many limitations of the existing literature. First, we use a large national sample, and investigate different types of abuse in a similar framework. Second, we pay careful attention to controlling for possible confounding factors by comparing male twins and by controlling for differences in genetic endowments that have been linked to aggression and risk taking behaviors. We find that maltreatment greatly increases the probability of engaging in crime and that programs to reduce maltreatment would be cost-effective.