

Analysis: Results and Discussion

A total of 135 research projects that met the criteria were included in the audit.⁴ These are listed in Appendix B. As well as identifying the title of the project, other key information is also listed to enable matching with publications arising from the audit, as listed in Appendix C. These include: the name of the key contact person, other investigators, current status (completed/ongoing), and project identification number.

Research questions addressed in this audit are described below under five key topics:

- Coverage;
- Research Infrastructure;
- Methodology;
- Productivity; and
- Findings.

A. Coverage

1. Number of research projects examining each type of abuse or neglect

Researchers currently talk about five different types of child maltreatment: (a) sexual abuse; (b) physical abuse; (c) psychological maltreatment – including emotional abuse and psychological neglect; (d) physical neglect; and, more recently, (e) witnessing family violence. Respondents to the audit were asked to select which of these five types of maltreatment were addressed in their research. They could select either one type (if their project was exclusively focused on a particular form of abuse or neglect), or multiple types. If the research was generic or addressed the five forms of maltreatment, respondents could select all five (the number of projects assessing each type therefore sum to more than 100%). Of the 135 projects included in the audit, the total number of research projects for each maltreatment type is described in Table 1.

Maltreatment type(s):	Number of research projects:	
	<i>n</i>	%
Physical abuse	114	84.4
Sexual abuse	111	82.2
Psychological maltreatment	108	80.0
Neglect (physical)	106	78.5
Witnessing family violence	84	62.2
All 5 maltreatment types	73	54.1

In just over half of the research projects (54 per cent) all five maltreatment types were addressed. In the remaining 62 projects (46 per cent), either one type or, most commonly, a combination of two, three or four maltreatment types were addressed. The area that received the least attention was children's exposure to domestic or family violence.

The inclusion of all maltreatment types may be seen as a reflection of the maturity of the child protection research community in Australia. Internationally, child maltreatment research has

4 As of 12 July 2005, there were 141 completed submissions to the audit. Of these, two projects did not commence within the specified time frame and therefore were excluded, and 14 projects had one or more of the 'exclusion criteria' marked as 'yes' but were still submitted. Of these 14, just four projects were deemed unsuitable for inclusion within the audit and were removed. The remaining 10 projects had the (exclusion) criteria altered to reflect their correct status for inclusion. A final total of 135 suitable projects were included in the audit.