

Witnessing Arrests May Increase Stress Risk in Children: Study

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(PhysOrg.com) -- A University of Illinois at Chicago study says children in the nation's child welfare system who witnessed the arrest of a household member may have been psychologically traumatized by the arrest.

Susan D. Phillips, assistant professor of social work and the study's lead author, found that children who saw the arrest of a household member had elevated symptoms of posttraumatic [stress](#) or PTS -- a psychological response to witnessing a traumatic or life-threatening event.

Even after accounting for other factors that might explain the condition, such as maltreatment or child abuse, the elevated symptoms associated with PTS remained, the study found.

Phillips suggests mental health professionals should be regularly screening to see if children have witnessed an [arrest](#) of someone they lived with and get them the help they need.

Data from the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-being was used to examine the experiences of children ages 8 and up who were suspected victims of [child abuse](#) and neglect.

The results are published online in the journal [Children and Youth Services Review](#). Jian Zhao, a former graduate student at the university, was the study's co-author.

Provided by University of Illinois at Chicago

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