

# Research shows long-term economic impact of childhood sexual abuse on survivors

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Using data from the Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA), researchers at the ESRI and Trinity find that male survivors of CSA are three times more likely to be out of the labour force due to sickness/disability compared to other men.

A new Research Bulletin published by the ESRI and Trinity College Dublin today (Friday August 15th 2014) reports on a study which examined whether people who experienced childhood sexual abuse (CSA) suffered long-term economic consequences in terms of lower attachment to the [labour market](#) and/or lower incomes.

The study uses data from the first wave of Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA). Between 2009 and 2011, 8,500 people aged 50 and over and living in Ireland were interviewed about a wide range of issues such as income, wealth, labour force status and health. Through a self-completed questionnaire, participants were also asked questions about [sexual abuse](#) suffered before the age of 18.

Key findings include:

- 5.6 per cent of men and 6.7 per cent of women in the study said that they had experienced [childhood sexual abuse](#) (CSA).
- Looking at people aged 50 to 64, 17 per cent of male and 14 percent of female survivors of CSA were out of the [labour force](#) as a result of being sick or permanently disabled. (The corresponding figures for those who had not experienced CSA

were 8 and 6 per cent respectively.)

- Controlling for factors such as age and education, the gap between male survivors of CSA and other men is even greater, with CSA survivors being three times more likely to be sick or disabled.
- After controlling for factors like age and education, it is estimated that male survivors of CSA live in households where the household income is 34 per cent lower.
- Male survivors of CSA are twice as likely to be living alone compared to other men.

Report author Alan Barrett said: "Studies on the impact of CSA have tended to be undertaken by researchers in the fields of health and psychology. This study is somewhat unique both nationally and internationally because we look at the lifelong economic impact these experiences have had on survivors. We find significant impacts even though we are looking at people aged between 50 and 64 who experienced abuse over thirty years earlier as children."

He continued: "These results are important in developing our understanding of the life-long impacts of CSA. They also have relevance to the question of appropriate levels of compensation. The results put a figure on the scale of lost income and this could be used when calculating compensation for survivors".

**More information:** This Research Bulletin is a short summary of a paper which has been accepted for publication in the *Journal of Behavioural and Experimental Economics*, written by Alan Barrett (ESRI), Yumiko Kamiya (UN) and Vincent O'Sullivan (Lancaster University). All three authors are formerly of TILDA at Trinity College Dublin.

Provided by Trinity College Dublin

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