

# Study looks at the impact of violence on children

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It's not how much violence a child is exposed to that can create emotional and behavioral problems in life. It's exposure to a variety of different types of violence.

Provided by Portland State University

That was a surprising finding in a five-year study recently completed by Laura Hickman of Portland State University and researchers at the RAND Corporation. The study, titled "How Much Does 'How Much' Matter?" will be published in the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*.

In answer to the report's title, the study found that "how much" was generally not as important as "how many kinds."

"Studies usually look at violence more narrowly. It's rare that we see these different types examined together," said Hickman, an associate professor of [Criminology](#) and [Criminal Justice](#).

The study examined 768 young children in selected cities throughout the United States, all of whom had been exposed to at least one of 16 types of violence falling into four broad categories: witnessing violence (including violence outside the home), maltreatment, child assault, and [sexual abuse](#). Children who exhibited the most problems were not the ones exposed to the most violent incidents. Instead, negative symptoms were most related to exposure to more than one broad category.

Hickman said studies of this kind may eventually help refine the way mental health professionals think about risk factors for longer term problems for kids in [traumatic situations](#).

"Of course, it's important to provide help and support for all children exposed to violence but it may be that we need to do something extra or different for kids whose [violence exposure](#) falls into more than one category."

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