

Fighting Child Victimization

Researchers receive \$2M in grants to study sex trafficking, Internet exploitation

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UNH's [Crimes against Children Research Center](#) has been awarded three grants totaling more than \$2 million from the National Institute of Justice to study child sex exploitation and related crimes. Two of the awards will provide new information on child sex trafficking victimization and a third will study how the technology is used in crimes like sextortion and cyberstalking.

One of the studies on sex trafficking is a national survey that follows up on a 2005 CCRC survey. "Law enforcement has been trying in recent years to identify more juveniles engaged in commercial sexual exploitation and treat them as crime victims rather than as offenders and juvenile delinquents," says study director [Kim Mitchell](#), research associate professor of psychology. "Our study will assess whether police practices have been moving in the right direction."

Another study will look at the efforts to build effective programs to work with sex trafficking victims. "This can be a difficult population to help," says study director [Lisa Jones](#), research associate professor of psychology. "Victims often have multiple problems like abusive families, foster care histories, running away and substance abuse. We want to find out if programs are making a difference." The CCRC will partner with Love146, a nonprofit victim service agency that provides services to youth trafficking victims, for this study.

A third new study will conduct a national victim survey about crimes against young people that have been facilitated by the Internet and digital technologies. "These crimes are not well documented in conventional crime statistics, and their dynamics need to be better understood to aid in prevention and outreach to victims," says study director [David Finkelhor](#), professor of sociology and director of the CCRC.

In addition to these studies, CCRC researchers will also be involved in a large, collaborative, multidisciplinary research study awarded to Northeastern University to better understand the

health consequences of child sex trafficking victims, working with victim service agencies across the country.

The CCRC is the leading research center in the U.S. on topics related to commercial child sexual exploitation and technology with a history of studies on these topics dating back over 20 years.

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