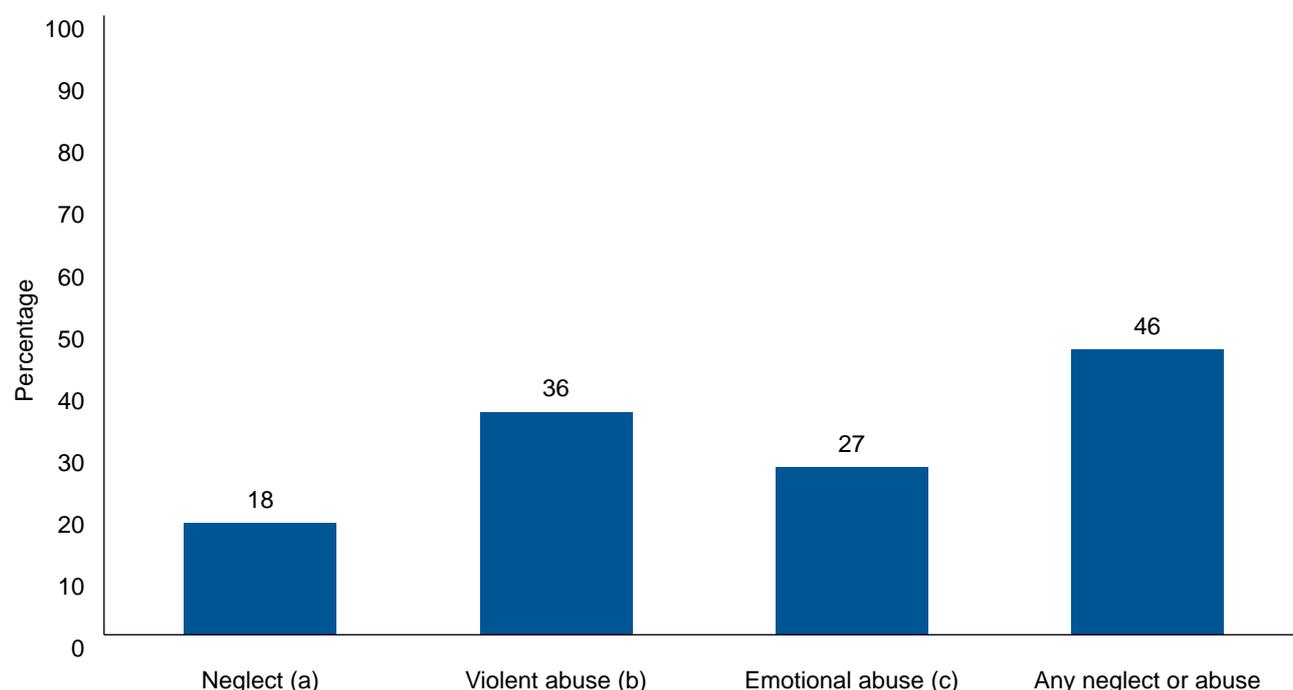


Experiences of neglect and abuse amongst juvenile detainees

The Drug Use Careers of Offenders (DUCO) study conducted by the Australian Institute of Criminology collected information on the lifetime offending and substance use patterns of 371 juveniles incarcerated in Australian detention centres. The project, which was funded by the Australian Government Attorney-General's Department, asked the juveniles to report their lifetime experiences of neglect and abuse. Violent abuse was most frequently reported (36%) followed by emotional abuse (27%) and neglect (18%). When combined, almost half the young people (46%) reported experiencing at least one of these types of abuse in their lifetime. Further analysis revealed that when neglect or abuse did occur, it was most likely to be by a parent or guardian, followed by a sibling. Moreover, the experiences of neglect and abuse also appeared to be linked to both drug use and crime. Juveniles reporting regular violent or property offending were more likely to report a history of neglect and abuse, as were juveniles reporting high frequency substance use in the six months prior to detention.

Neglect and abuse experiences of juvenile detainees



Survey questions: When you were growing up did anyone ever:

- (a) leave you by yourself for a long time as a child?
- (b) push you around, hit, kick or beat you?
- (c) make you feel very bad, sad or frightened?

SOURCE: Prichard J & Payne J 2005. Key findings from the Drug Use Careers of Juvenile Offenders study. *Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice* no 304. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology. <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi2/tandi304.html>