



INTRODUCTION

Herbert Mullin killed thirteen people and blamed it on the voices in his head (What makes serial killers tick?, 2020). A serial killer is defined as someone who has murdered at least three people. It is evident that there is a trend in the brain function of serial killers. Serial killers tend to lack the same emotional response (empathizing with the suffering) as the average brain to pain and suffering (John Parrington, 2021). Potential reasoning for this could be that some serial killers have two minds that co-exist: one rational and one irrational.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

The best way to present the data and back up the claims, is to use the data analysis technique called coding taking data from sources and putting them into categories that represent main ideas. The equipment needed is a computer. The data collected is qualitative and shows specific examples that back up whether or not the serial killer struggled with childhood trauma, substance abuse, and/or mental illness. The procedure is to create a chart labeled with the three main ideas: childhood trauma, mental illness, and substance abuse. Go through sources on each specific serial killer and divide their life into the sections copying and pasting any information that is even slightly relevant to the main idea. then, Take a week to summarize the evidence collected down further and pull out the most important information so that it can go into a final chart.

DATA AND FINDINGS

Appendix A

NAME	CHILDHOOD TRAUMA	MENTAL ILLNESS	SUBSTANCE ABUSE
Richard Ramirez	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Older cousin Mike would show photos of women he beat and raped Mike showed Richard how to kill with stealth Father was abusive so he slept in the cemetery Moved in with peeping Tom uncle Took Richard with him to spy on women Richard had sexual fantasies involving violence, forced bondage, and rape Used master key at his hotel job to rob guests Attempted to rape guests wife 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> he suffered multiple brain injuries. At age 2, a dresser fell on his head causing him to get 30 stitches, almost killing him. At age 6, he was hit by a swing, knocked unconscious and this caused deep griefs. age 11, he was diagnosed with epilepsy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> began using LSD and started to take an interest in Satanism. Began smoking marijuana at 10.
Ted Bundy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Born in home for unwed mothers Mother considered placing him for adoption Thought his mom was his sister Lived with grandparents. Grandmother suffered from depression and agoraphobia. Grandfather had a raging temper. Violent towards everyone and everything. Moved to Washington and hated his new stepfather. Stepfather would sometimes lash out at Bundy Taunted for having a speech impediment Didn't make any sports team which was hard for him to deal with. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on strange childhood behavior it was thought that Bundy was abused as a child Bundy had a deliberate public tantrum at Sears, wetting his pants Bundy liked to scare people Believed to have antisocial personality disorder Believed that Ted Bundy also showed signs of narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) 50 percent of the psychologists in the University of Kentucky study also labeled Bundy as having schizoid personality disorder (SPD) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turned to substances like marijuana when he couldn't engage in his main addiction of stalking and murdering women.
Harold Shipman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mother died when he was 17 from cancer Shipman was a loner at school Gave his mother Morphine and other strong painkillers to help with her suffering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Labeled as a Necrophiliac 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forged prescriptions to feed his painkiller addiction (mainly Morphine) Addiction became debilitating
Aileen Carol Wuornos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Father was a child molester and psychopath and killed himself in jail Mother abandoned her and her brother and handed them to grandparents Grandmother was an alcoholic and grandfather was terrifying and abusive Was sexually abused by grandfather and brother Gave birth at 14 and gave it up for adoption. Claimed the baby was her brother's. After grandma died was kicked out and forced to live in woods Exposed to sexual activities at a tender age, she began providing sexual favors in exchange for food, drugs, and cigarettes when she was just 11 years old. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exhibited signs of depression Had issues with abandonment, rejection, anxiety, impulsivity, and hostility. showed evidence of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aileen did lots of drugs and killed many men in a drug induced rage.

The following data in appendix A was collected by analyzing articles, journals, and documentaries. After sorting through the information, it is evident that the three factors: childhood abuse, mental illness, and substance abuse have a primitive role in the making of serial killers. Every serial killer that I analyzed suffered with at least two of these factors. Based on the data it's clear that many of the serial killers suffered some sort of abuse or trauma growing up. Common mental illnesses among serial killers seem to be bipolar disorder, antisocial personality disorder, and psychopathy.

CONCLUSIONS AND ANALYSIS

The perfect case study to illustrate the benefits of intervening early when a child is displaying signs of homicidal tendencies is Beth Harmon. Six-year-old Beth Thomas was sent to a camp for homicidal children. Thomas was adopted at 19 months old with her 7-month-old brother Jonathan. Beth had been heavily sexually abused by her biological father. Their mother died when Beth was one. As she got older, Beth was displaying more and more inappropriate, aggressive, and sexual behaviors. It was determined that she never developed a sense of consciousness because of everything she had gone through, meaning that she never learned right from wrong because she never trusted another adult. Once Beth was sent to the camp for troubled children, she did many chores and was strictly monitored. Her new life was filled with rules, but she was surrounded by people who cared about her and wanted her to get better. (Interview with an Evil Child, 2021). Now, Beth is a nurse and is saving lives.



It appears that the results of my data gathering backs up my initial hypothesis. Serial killers are made by one element or a combination of elements: childhood trauma, mental illnesses, and substance abuse. After analyzing 20 American serial killers, it seemed that every person had some things to fit in each category. While these three factors aren't the only ones that play into serial killers, they seem to be the most common and important when it comes to identifying killers. Every single serial killer seemed to have at least a little bit of childhood trauma that was known to the world.



IMPLICATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

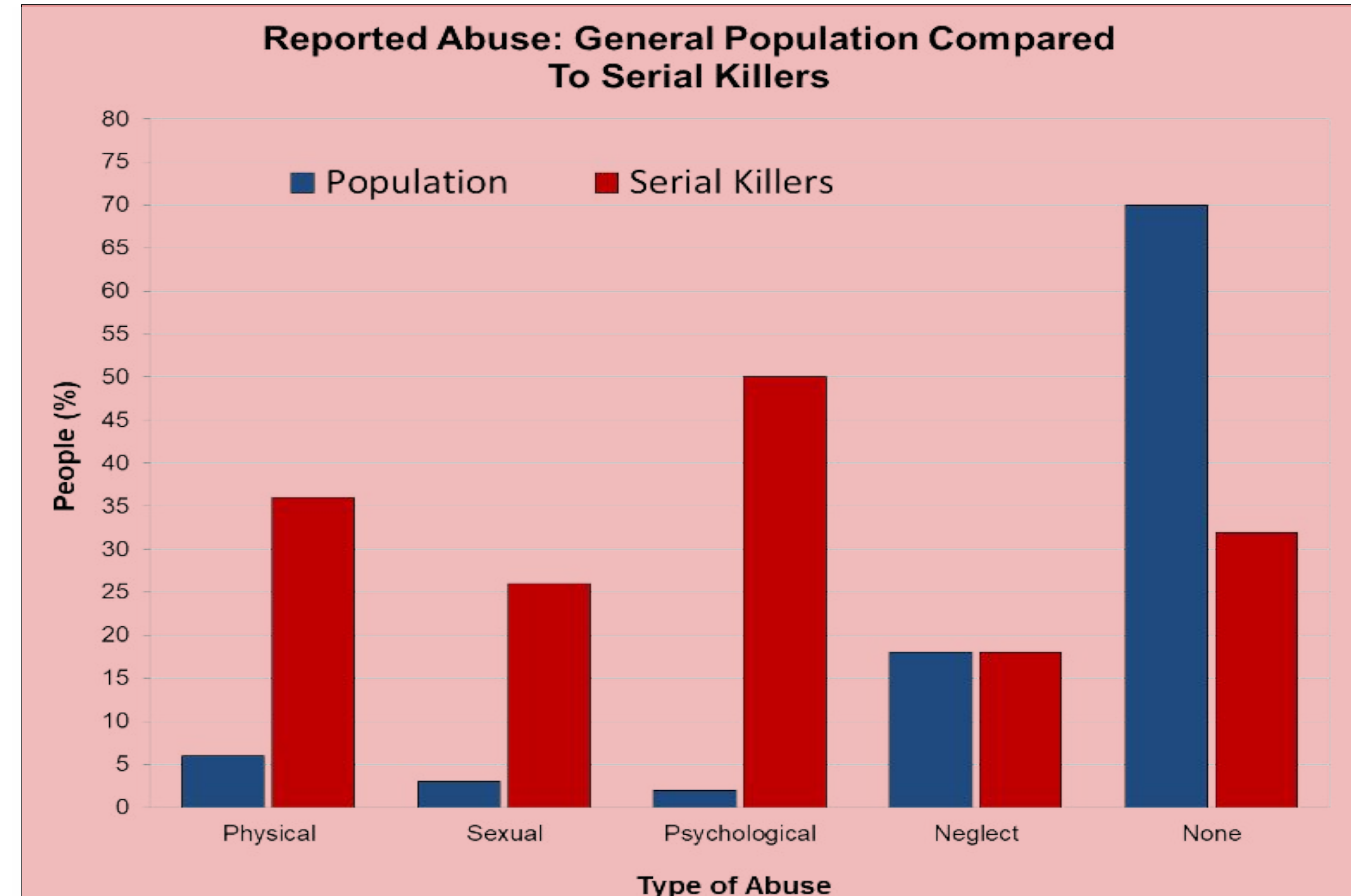


Figure 1: Shows the discrepancies in the amount of abuse serial killers endure compared to the general population.

As shown earlier by Beth Harmon, it's important to intervene when children are showing signs of serial killers or when they're in a situation where this could happen to them. The brain begins to develop the most in adolescence and if the child is constantly surrounded by violence with no one to guide them, it will affect them tremendously later on in their life which we can see from Appendix A. The problems in my investigation was that there wasn't much information on the childhoods of serial killers, most were hand picked to see if there would be enough information to collect about their past. Had there not been this restriction, more serial killers would have been used in the study.

In order to help solve the problem of serial killers: teachers, social workers, and possibly police officers should be given more training so that they can watch out for the signs in children. The signs include, torturing animals, arson, childhood abuse, obsessive sexual desires, and anti-social behavior. This could not only save many lives in the future, but could save a child from a bad situation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS / REFERENCES

***Special thanks to Jessica Tabron for helping make this project possible.

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