This research explores whether commercially sexually exploited children (CSEC) abuse drugs or face greater histories of abuse than their delinquent peers. This research will evaluate whether girls who are CSEC victims experience more abuse of drugs or experience more physical, emotional, or sexual abuse. The study also explores whether CSEC victims witnessed more abuse than non-CSEC victims. A survey of needs and issues facing delinquent girls was given to 130 girls between the ages of 13 to 18. Questions asked about their drug use, abuse history, and whether they witnessed abuse. This research found that many girls who are CSEC victims experience and witnessed more abuse than non-CSEC victims. The results also showed that CSEC victims and non-CSEC delinquent peers showed no significant difference in drug use.

The purpose of this study was to understand whether girls who were involved in prostitution use drugs such as alcohol, meth, cocaine, and other drugs more than delinquent girls who were not involved in prostitution. This study was also to determine whether girls who were involved in prostitution had a greater history of abuse than those who were not involved in prostitution. This study may also give people a better insight into the girls that enter into prostitution in hopes that it will help identify the resources they need to either never enter prostitution or to leave prostitution. Knowledge about the effects of prostitution on girls and why they enter into prostitution can help service providers offer better community resources to the girls.

Acknowledgments
I would like to give my sincere thanks to Dr. Alexis Kennedy for being a great mentor and ensuring my success in pursuing my research topic.

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Teens

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Teen girls are being brought into prostitution every day and are constantly being sexually exploited. Prostitution has to do with all exchanges of sex for money or goods and services, such as drugs, food, housing, clothing, etc. (Larrode, Thibodeau, Gune, & Hebert, 2010). It has been estimated that 400,000 children are involved in prostitution in the United States every year (Helleman & Santhiveeran, 2011). Many girls are victims of physical abuse, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, and molestation. It is estimated that 8 to 10% of girls are involved in prostitution (Heilemann & Santhiveeran, 2011). Women in prostitution are more vulnerable to being victims of homicides. In 2011 2.5% to 2.7% of female homicides were victims of prostitution. Teen girls are being brought into prostitution every day and are becoming more at risk for prostitution. This research explores whether commercially sexually exploited girls come from homes where they have a parent that is involved in prostitution. The girls were asked if they used crack, cocaine, heroine, marijuana, alcohol, meth, and other drugs. The girls were also asked if they had witnessed abuse of a family member or been physically and mentally abused themselves. All of the 130 girls interviewed were between the ages of 12 and 18. Out of the 130 girls 94 were non-CSEC victims and 36 of the girls were CSEC victims. For the remained of the results, the victims were compared to the non-CSEC involved girls.

From August 2013 to December of 2013 face-to-face interviews were conducted of teenage girls. All the girls were detained in the Clark County Department of Juvenile Justice Services (DJS). The girls were asked questions from the Center for Disease Control’s Youth Risk Behavior Survey, the survey developed by Owen and Bloom (2000), and the GIRLS Initiative Workgroup convened by DJS. 130 girls were interviewed by graduate students from the Department of criminal justice and were supervised by Dr. Alexis Kennedy. To understand the rates of risky behavior, a quantitative study was conducted polling a variety of behaviors.

The results show that there is not much difference between drug abuse among teen girls who are CSEC victims and those who are not CSEC victims. Teen girls could have been coerced into drug abuse drugs at the same rate. However, no significant difference may have been found because the sample of girls were not big enough and there was no difference in results. When we analyzed the results we concluded that CSEC victims and non-CSEC victims are in regards to their abuse rates no significant differences.

We bring up the conclusion that CSEC victims are a hard group to understand and help. They are hard to help because they experience so much hardship and trauma. Many times they cannot be assisted with support when they are detained. They are usually being abused by that they may have in the areas they were trafficked to or trafficked from. When testing CSEC victims you have to test each individual differently depending on the subject. They have all types of drug use, drug abuse, and psychological problems. CSEC victims already experience high social stigmas whether they want to test them differently or not. We are not looking at them as drug abuse and all the abuse history on the drug or high social behavior. This makes testing even more difficult because their lives are different experiences and have different needs.

Learning how to identify whether a youth is a CSEC victim is possible and something that many parents such as school officials can be taught to identify. However, there are many CSEC victims in law enforcement, social workers, and others instead of offending these victims will continue to be victims. Las Vegas sheriff’s department needs to learn how to help CSEC victims and other victims for them. They should start by passing Safe Harbor laws and then making laws according to the assessments made on each CSEC victims. Officers can help individuals who help in contact with other CSEC victims should be trained and informed on how to better help CSEC victims.

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