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USERS PROGRAM

Background

- Child maltreatment is a significant societal problem.
- Over a third of children in the United States will be the subject of a child maltreatment investigation in their lifetimes.¹
- One in 8 will be confirmed to have experienced maltreatment.²
- One in 17 children will be placed in out of home care.³
- All states have had mandated reporting laws in place since 1969, with this practice being federally mandated since the passage of CAPTA in 1974.
- Prior studies have attempted to understand if reports from mandated and permissive sources are similar or different in nature and outcomes.
- Most of this work has focused on a single outcome variable - case substantiation.
- It has been consistently found that reports from mandates sources are **more likely** to be **substantiated**.
- Little work exists tracking longer term child maltreatment outcomes by report source beyond the initial substantiation decision (Giovannoni, 1995).⁴

Research Questions

- Do reports from mandated and permissive sources have different outcomes at the index report (substantiation and foster care entry)?
- Do reports from mandated and permissive sources have different trajectories beyond the index report (rereport, substantiated rereport and later foster care entry)?

Table 1. State Frequencies and Percentages or Mean and SD of the Sample (n=7213)

Variables	n	% or Mean (SD)
Children's Age	7213	5.09 (3.43)
Neighborhood Income/10k	7213	2.46 (1.25)
Abuse Type		
Neglect	4471	61.98%
Physical Abuse	2007	27.82%
Sexual Abuse	578	08.01%
Mix	153	02.12
Report Severity		
Severe	963	13.35%
Sex		
Female	3503	48.57%
Male	3710	51.43%
Report Source		
Mandated	2951	40.91%
Permissive	4262	59.09%
Index Outcome		
Unsubstantiated	5551	76.96%
Substantiated	1,662	23.04%
Recurrence		
No	3493	48.43%
Yes	3720	51.57%
Recurrence Report Outcome		
Unsubstantiated	3548	80.73%
Substantiated	847	19.27%
Foster Care at Index		
No Entry	6892	95.55%
Entry	321	4.45%
Later Foster Care		
No	6065	84.08%
Yes	1148	15.92%

Methodology

- Primary analysis utilized a detailed cross-sector, longitudinal dataset collected in a midwestern metropolitan area from 1993 to 2009 (N=7,302).
- We followed children with index reports from mandated and permissive sources and tracked initial case disposition (substantiation, entry into care), as well as later recurrence events (any report, any substantiated report, subsequent entry into care).
- Bivariate analysis, survival analysis and logistic regressions using a range of control variables were performed.
- A separate set of similar analyses using the less detailed data available from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) Child Files and the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) was conducted (N=about 1.8 million).

Results

Both datasets yielded similar results.

- Consistent with prior literature, mandated reporters were much more likely to have their reports substantiated
 - Almost 4xs (3xs bivariate) more likely at the *state* level and 2x at the *national* level)
- Index reports from mandated sources were also much more likely to transition to foster care
 - At the *state* level, they were 2.1x (4.5 bivariate) more likely, while 2x more likely at the *national* level.
- In stark contrast, we found that index event reporter status (mandated/permissive) did not predict report recurrence at the state or national level.
 - They were 4% (*national level*) and 8% (*state level*) less likely, though these were not significant.
- At the *state* level, index reports from mandated sources were 13 percent (3% at bivariate) less likely to predict later foster care entry, while at the *national* level they were 12% much more likely.

Results

Table 2. Logistic Regression Models for State Level Outcomes (N=7,118)

Predictor Variables	Model I: Substantiation Odds Ratio	Model II: Foster Care Odds Ratio	Model III: Recurrence Odds Ratio
Substantiated Outcome (Unsubstantiated)	-----	12.82****	1.11
Reporter Type (Permissive)			
Mandated	3.92****	2.17****	0.87**
Severity	1.30**	1.02	0.87
Urbanicity (Non-City)	1.06	1.12	1.29***
Maltreatment Type (Neglect)			
Physical Abuse	.68****	1.45**	0.74****
Sexual Abuse	2.12****	0.44**	0.57****
Mix	3.38****	1.32	1.02
Child and Family Demographics			
Age	1.02*	0.87****	0.97****
White (Non-White)	0.66****	****	0.76****
Female (Male)	0.95	1.13	0.95
Income/10k	0.92*	1.04	0.91**
Mother H.S. Graduate (Non-Graduate)	0.88*	0.76*	0.83***
Pseudo R ²	0.171	0.29	0.062
Model Likelihood Ratio χ^2 (df)	856.09 (11)****	653.34****	339.51(12)****

Reference Group is shown in parenthesis. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, **** $p < .0001$ one-tailed test

Results

Table 3: Bivariate Analysis Comparisons in Percentages

		Index Substantiation		Foster Care Entry		Recurrence		Substantiation 2nd Report		Later Foster Care	
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
State (n=7209)	Permissive	87.2%	12.8%	98.2%	1.8%	46.7%	53.4%	82.3%	17.7%	83.9%	16.1%
	Mandated	62.1%	37.9%	91.8%	8.2%	51.0%	49.0%	78.4%	21.6%	84.4%	15.6%
National (n=1,792,744)	Permissive	85.1%	14.9%	97.1%	2.9%	57.8%	42.3%	90.3%	9.8%	97.5%	2.5%
	Mandated	69.8%	30.2%	94.3%	5.8%	59.4%	40.7%	89.6%	10.4%	97.2%	2.8%
State	Ratio	2.96		4.56		0.92		1.22		0.97	
National		2.03		2.00		0.96		1.06		1.12	

Discussion

- We confirm the longstanding finding that reports from mandated sources have higher initial substantiation rates.
- However, while cases from mandated and permissive reporters clearly differ in **immediate** outcomes, they are not very different in **longer term** outcomes.
- A primary goal of the child protective services system is providing preventative interventions to forestall subsequent maltreatment.
- Since we find children reported by either type of reporter to be at similar long-term risk, we would advise that screening protocols should not prioritize reports from professional sources.

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