

# **NSCAW Secondary Analysis Projects 2005-2007**

## **Board of Trustees, University of Illinois**

*Project Title:*

Evaluation of Individual, Familial, and Community Level Factors Related to Secondary Maltreatment of Children Subject to Initial Child Welfare Investigations

*Principal Investigator:*

Mark Testa, PhD

*Project Abstract:*

While the past four decades have seen enormous growth in public concern over and assumption of responsibility for intervention in child abuse and neglect, the professional literature has not yet addressed a number of important constructs concerning etiological factors creating situations of risk. Foremost among these is the issue of what predicts secondary maltreatment or a re-report once an initial report has been found credible. Using reports of secondary maltreatment in the NSCAW data set, this project will contribute to the state of existing knowledge about this issue.

This study is comprehensive in nature and will examine the issue of secondary maltreatment broadly while offering a number of unique avenues for more in-depth investigation. First, the research involves an examination of both formally reported child maltreatment and child-identified maltreatment. These two outcome variables will be assessed in bivariate relationship with a large number of individual predictors identified in the literature as having potentially significant relationships. Specific lines of inquiry concern the issue of the type and legal status of the placement in which a child lives (birth home, formal kinship care placement, adoptive home, etc.) and the degree to which biological relatedness of the primary caregiver (mother, grandmother, etc.) acts alone and in conjunction to affect safety. Furthermore, the strength of the relationship between the caregiver and child will be examined as a potential mediating factor. Finally, issues of child disability (cognitive and mental health/behavioral), identification thereof by caregivers and the formal service system, and the potential mediating effects of service delivery as predictive factors will be examined. A hazard model analysis of the relative contribution of each of these constructs to the outcome variables of interest, controlling for all relevant covariates, will be developed.

## **The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia**

*Project Title:*

Outcomes Among Children Living in Supervised and Unsupervised Kinship Care Arrangements

*Principal Investigator:*

David M. Rubin, PhD

*Project Abstract:*

Over the last decade, the number of children raised by relatives in what is commonly known as kinship care has risen dramatically, with the majority living in such arrangements unbeknownst to the child welfare system. While prior research has highlighted the needs and services delivered to children whose kinship arrangements were known to the child welfare system, comparatively less is known about the needs, experiences, and outcomes of those children raised outside the system.

This study will analyze the NSCAW data, in order to better understand the pathways by which children enter kinship care, as well as the comparative needs, experiences, and outcomes among these different groups of children. The project will undertake a careful analysis of the impact of kinship care on outcomes that not only accounts for baseline differences in children living in different types of families, but also considers the impact of their subsequent experience on their needs and outcomes. Specifically, the study will (1) describe the characteristics and outcomes of children raised in supervised and unsupervised kinship care following a report of child abuse or neglect; (2) compare the characteristics of children whose kinship care is unsupervised with other children raised in-home by their birth parents; and (3) compare the characteristics and behavioral outcomes of children whose kinship care is supervised with other children in non-relative foster care within the child welfare system.

## **Children's Hospital Research Center**

*Project Title:*

Advancing Knowledge on Needs and Service Use for High Risk Children in Child Welfare

*Principal Investigator:*

Laurel K. Leslie, MD

*Project Abstract:*

There is increasing awareness that experiences of abuse and/or neglect not only affect children's basic safety but may also impact their developmental trajectories. Recent federal legislation has concluded that child welfare agencies must incorporate concepts of developmental well being into their

policies and practices and collaborate with other agencies that care for children's health, developmental, and mental health needs.

This study will provide important national data regarding youth need and service use, taking a developmental perspective that first examines needs over the age span within and across different domains of development over time, and then investigates the association between needs and services use within and across agencies that target various domains of needs. Building on recent analyses of the National Study on Child and Adolescent Well-being (NSCAW) data, this project will take a more refined, integrated approach to needs and services use to answer the following questions: (1) What specific patterns of problems are present across the domains of health, development, and mental health at baseline and at 36 months, and what factors predict these patterns? (2) What patterns of service use for children in child welfare are seen across service sectors such as health, developmental, educational, and mental health over time? (3) What factors, including need across developmental domains predict early (first 18 months) versus (19-36 months) use of health, developmental, educational, and mental health services?

## **Duke University**

### *Project Title:*

Effects of Parental Arrest/Incarceration on Outcomes of Children in the Child Welfare System

### *Co-Principal Investigators:*

Susan D. Phillips, PhD and Al Erkanli, PhD

### *Project Abstract:*

Over the last several decades the number of people in correctional institutions increased to historically unprecedented levels. Rates of incarceration increased even more dramatically for women than for men. Because women in prison are more likely than men to have lived with their children before being incarcerated, the arrest and incarceration of women is thought to be more disruptive to children and more likely to trigger contact with child welfare service agencies (CWS). Accordingly, data from the baseline wave of NSCAW showed that a child's parent (a mother in over 90 percent of the cases) had recently been arrested in approximately 1 out of 8 cases of reported maltreatment. In addition to other observed differences, these youth were significantly more likely to be in out-of-home care, particularly kinship placements.

These analyses will address the question of what, if any, direct and indirect effect parental arrest/incarceration has over time on children's emotional

and behavioral problems (CBCL scores). For older youth, delinquent activities will also be examined as an outcome variable. The hypothesis is that if a parent's involvement in the criminal justice system is significantly related to children's outcomes it will be through (1) differences in their life experiences subsequent to contact with CWS, and/or (2) in a differential likelihood of placement with kin which, in turn, will be associated with a decreased likelihood of receiving indicated mental health services. To test this hypothesis, the study will use structural equation modeling to assess the relationships over time among life events, placements, use of mental health services, and children's emotional and behavioral outcomes (or delinquent activities) using parental involvement in the criminal justice system as a covariable.

## **Rand Corporation**

### *Project Title:*

The Relationship between Resilience and Outcomes for Children Involved with the Child Protection System

### *Principal Investigator:*

Dana Schultz, MPP

### *Project Abstract:*

The National Survey on Child and Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW) offers a unique opportunity to examine the relationships between resilience and outcomes for children who enter the child protection system. Resiliency is the mechanism that enables some children to mitigate the negative effects of exposure to violence through key protective factors, such as social competence, coping skills, peer relationships, and caregiver social support.

This study plans a two-stage approach to studying the relationship between resilience and outcomes. In the first stage, the demographic and contextual factors that are associated with positive outcomes for children will be explored. For this research, the focus will be narrowed to three outcomes: child behavior, mental health, and academic achievement. The associations will be estimated for the population at large, as well as for subgroups of interest such as different racial and ethnic groups, children in rural versus urban areas, and children exposed to different types of maltreatment. In the second stage, three functions will be performed: 1) running trajectory models on several protective factors to identify the paths of resilience that children who enter the child welfare system take over time; 2) examining the demographic and contextual factors that are correlated with each path; and 3) examining the correlations between resilience paths and our outcomes of interest.

## **University of New Hampshire**

*Project Title:*

Resilient Adaptation Among Maltreated Children

*Principal Investigator:*

Wendy A. Walsh, PhD

*Project Abstract:*

Child maltreatment is associated with an increased risk for internalizing problems, such as depression and anxiety, and externalizing problems, such as aggression, delinquency, and antisocial behavior. Furthermore, because child maltreatment tends to co-occur with other adversities, including parental conflict, parental psychopathology, community violence, and poverty, resilient adaptation may be particularly challenging.

Yet some maltreated children achieve higher levels of adaptive functioning than other. However, to date very few longitudinal research studies have been conducted on the resources that enhance resilience among maltreated children. The Secondary Analysis of data from the National Survey of Child Abuse and Neglect offers a unique opportunity to analyze a national longitudinal sample of CPS cases to develop practice and policy recommendations to enhance resilience. This study aims to 1) explore the prevalence and stability of resilience over time for different age groups and different subsamples, including different demographic groups, groups with varying levels and types of resources and adversities; and 2) to develop a comprehensive causal model to understand the development and maintenance of resilience.

## **University of Rochester**

*Project Title:*

Factors Affecting the Life Trajectories and Resilience of Maltreated Children

*Principal Investigator:*

George E. Fryer, Jr., PhD

*Project Abstract:*

The purpose of this project is to explore the life trajectories of children and families involved with child protective services through secondary analyses of the Survey on Child and Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW) dataset. Its results may be used to develop services that are more sensitive to the various needs and situations of victimized children and their families

The primary goal of this project is to provide important information useful in reinforcing the resilience of maltreated children and improving their immediate and future well-being. To this end, the study will employ structural equation modeling and repeated measures procedures. The primary dependent variable for these analyses will be resilience, as measured by seven domains of adaptive functioning developed and validated in previous research. In the interest of providing information useful for making decisions at critical points in case handling, many of the planned analyses will be stratified. These will focus on issues including (1) the substantiation of allegations, (2) the need for out of home placement, and (3) the provision of services. All multivariate procedures will include characteristics of the maltreated child, the child's family, and community, to examine their influence on child well-being, and their mediation of the effect of the child protection services that have been provided. Results of analyses of the NSCAW dataset may become a platform for more evidence-based decision making in attending to the needs of maltreated children. By examining the resilience of these children in the face of adversity, the interaction of the complex forces that shape the quality of children's lives may be better understood.

## **The University of Tennessee**

### *Project Title:*

What Happens to Children After their Sexual Abuse is Substantiated?

### *Principal Investigator:*

Rebecca M. Bolen, PhD

### *Project Abstract:*

Sexual abuse is qualitatively different than any other child maltreatment, primarily because of the presence of nonoffending parents. It would be expected that, due to their presence, most sexually abused children would remain in their homes with the nonoffending parent after investigation. Instead, sexually abused children may be at greater risk than children with other child maltreatment to be removed from their home, and when removed, appear more likely to be placed in more restrictive settings.

Regretfully, there is no single source that gathers sufficient information about children after maltreatment investigation to determine their case disposition and the child's needs, experiences, and services over time. Further, official data seldom have the depth of information to ascertain children's needs versus services and experiences, and currently, there is no national data gathering source that follows children longitudinally. Without

this information, the evaluation of placement practices, and the effect of policies on those practices, is limited.

The purpose of this study is to do a secondary analysis of children with a substantiated case of sexual abuse in the NSCAW database to answer four research questions: (1) What initial characteristics, experiences, and needs of the sexually abused child, family, or case are related to the failure to protect, remove, and initial placement decisions? (2) When sexually abused children are grouped by the risk to them of further abuse were they to remain in the home, are those emergent groups related to decisions to categorize nonoffending parents as failing to protect the child and to remove the child? (3) When nonoffending parents are grouped by their characteristics, are these emergent groups related to decisions to categorize nonoffending parents as failing to protect the child and remove the child? and (4) Do child and family characteristics, experiences, needs, and services, and caseworker characteristics predict placement successes and failures over time?