



Recurrence Rates by Child Protection Concern

Barbara Fallon, Nico Trocmé, Tara Black, Anna Ekins, Carolyn O'Connor, and Paul-André Betito

Introduction

The Ontario Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (OCANDS) is the first data system in Ontario to longitudinally track children and their families involved with the child welfare system. OCANDS extracts administrative data from participating child welfare agencies and standardizes these data to better understand the trajectories of children and their families across their involvement with the system. One of the tasks performed by OCANDS is to calculate “Service Performance Indicators” (SPIs) for participating child welfare agencies. In 2011, 24 SPIs were endorsed by the province as a metric that would represent the key dimensions of child welfare initially put forward by the National Outcomes Matrix (NOM) (Trocmé et al., 2009): safety, permanence and wellbeing, as well as agency management (Commission to Promote Sustainable Child Welfare, 2012). For additional contextual information about the SPIs, please see the OCANDS fact sheets (Fallon et al., 2016; Fallon, Filippelli, Black, King, & Ekins, 2016).

With resources from a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Connections grant, we have partnered with a group of agencies to use OCANDS to address their specific questions about the experiences of children and their families who are served by agencies in Ontario. The purpose of this information sheet is to present data collected from six child welfare agencies on recurrence. **Recurrence** refers to families coming back into contact with the child welfare system after their files were closed. This is viewed as a proxy for service effectiveness. This data was further disaggregated by child protection concern.

Methodology

SPI 4 (Recurrence of Child Protection Concerns in a Family after an Investigation) is calculated by documenting each closed investigation for the fiscal year and following that investigation forward by one year. This would calculate a 12-month verified recurrence for investigations. Verification refers to whether it is more probable than not that the originally alleged or new child protection concerns (including harm or risk of harm) have occurred or currently exist (Commission, 2012). SPI 5 (Recurrence of Child Protection Concerns in a Family after Ongoing Protection Services) is calculated by documenting each closed ongoing case file for the fiscal year and following that case forward by one year. This would calculate a 12-month verified recurrence for on-going cases. SPI 4 and 5 results were further categorized by child protection concern, determined by eligibility spectrum codes.

Findings

Recurrence by Child Protection Concern: Index Intervention by Fiscal Year

Tables 1 and 2 present the rate of service recurrence at the index intervention stage (how cases were coded following investigation), for cases closed at investigation (i.e. SPI-4) and ongoing services (SPI-5) over fiscal years. Overall, these findings indicate that the majority of cases within any of the categories do not recur. It should be noted that comparing the rates between categories presents challenges as both the denominators and numerators vary significantly between child protection concerns. That is, the rate of a category with a relatively small denominator will fluctuate more dramatically based on a very small number of cases.

Table 1.

12-Month Service Recurrence (SPI-4) by Index Child Protection Concern (2011/2012, 2012/2013, 2013/2014)

Intake Eligibility	2011/12			2012/13			2013/14		
	Denom*	Num**	%	Denom	Num	%	Denom	Num	%
Physical Abuse	4801	477	9.94%	4500	438	9.73%	4566	431	9.44%
Sexual Abuse	855	101	11.81%	818	90	11.00%	850	75	8.82%
Neglect	2831	420	14.84%	2597	341	13.13%	2644	374	14.15%
Emotional Maltreatment	471	62	13.16%	441	59	13.38%	461	48	10.41%
Exposure to Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)	5015	757	15.09%	4721	683	14.47%	4625	630	13.62%
Caregiver - Child Conflict or Child Behaviour	808	161	19.93%	702	156	22.22%	590	92	15.59%
Caregiver Capacity	3743	629	16.80%	3840	580	15.10%	3679	582	15.82%
Custody	438	109	24.89%	419	72	17.18%	385	68	17.66%
Total	18962	2716	14.32%	18038	2419	13.41%	17800	2300	12.92%

***Denominator:** All cases closed at investigation during the fiscal year (both verified and not-verified)

****Numerator:** All cases closed at investigation during the fiscal year that were re-opened within 12 months of case closure where the allegations of child welfare concern were verified



Table 2.

12-Month Service Recurrence (SPI-5) by Index Child Protection Concern (2011/2012, 2012/2013, 2013/2014)

Intake Eligibility	2011/12			2012/13			2013/14		
	Denom*	Num**	%	Denom	Num	%	Denom	Num	%
Physical Abuse	519	63	12.14%	619	69	11.15%	663	95	14.33%
Sexual Abuse	116	19	16.38%	138	9	6.52%	132	16	12.12%
Neglect	530	87	16.42%	611	107	17.51%	710	121	17.04%
Emotional Maltreatment	99	16	16.16%	81	15	18.52%	102	19	18.63%
Exposure to IPV	1125	196	17.42%	1217	232	19.06%	1453	261	17.96%
Caregiver - Child Conflict or Child Behaviour	587	86	14.65%	648	97	14.97%	681	86	12.63%
Caregiver Capacity	2058	382	18.56%	2126	389	18.30%	2182	402	18.42%
Custody	143	28	19.58%	174	34	19.54%	185	34	18.38%
Total	5177	877	16.94%	5614	952	16.96%	6108	1034	16.93%

***Denominator:** All cases closed following on-going services during the fiscal year (both verified and not-verified)

****Numerator:** All cases closed at on-going services during the fiscal year that were re-opened within 12 months of case closure where the allegations of child welfare concern were verified

Recurrence by Maltreatment Type: Intake and Recurrence Eligibility

Table 3 shows the recurrence rates for cases closed at investigation (SPI 4) classified by the four most common child welfare concerns at both the index and recurrence stages for the 2013/2014 fiscal year (i.e. physical abuse, neglect, exposure to IPV, and caregiver capacity categories). Of the 4566 physical abuse cases, 9.88% recurred in the 12 months following discharge: 118 (2.58%) recurred for physical abuse, 80 (1.75%) for caregiver capacity and 80 (1.75%) for exposure to IPV related concerns.



Table 3.

12-Month Service Recurrence (SPI-4) - Physical Abuse, Neglect, Exposure to Intimate Partner Violence, and Caregiver Capacity (2013/14 Fiscal Year)

Intake Eligibility	Recurrence Eligibility	2013/2014		
		Denom	Num	%
Physical Abuse	Physical Abuse	4566	118	2.58%
	Sexual Abuse		16	0.35%
	Neglect		63	1.38%
	Emotional Maltreatment		15	0.33%
	Exposure to IPV		80	1.75%
	Caregiver - Child Conflict or Child Behaviour		57	1.25%
	Caregiver Capacity		80	1.75%
	Custody		22	0.48%
	Other		-	-
Neglect	Physical Abuse	2644	50	1.89%
	Sexual Abuse		8	0.30%
	Neglect		110	4.16%
	Emotional Maltreatment		8	0.30%
	Exposure to IPV		68	2.57%
	Caregiver - Child Conflict or Child Behaviour		27	1.02%
	Caregiver Capacity		102	3.86%
	Custody		15	0.57%
	Other		-	-
Exposure to IPV	Physical Abuse	4625	51	1.10%
	Sexual Abuse		10	0.22%
	Neglect		53	1.15%
	Emotional Maltreatment		18	0.39%
	Exposure to IPV		325	7.03%
	Caregiver - Child Conflict or Child Behaviour		24	0.52%
	Caregiver Capacity		129	2.79%
	Custody		45	0.97%
	Other		1	0.02%
Caregiver Capacity	Physical Abuse	3679	32	0.87%
	Sexual Abuse		12	0.33%
	Neglect		83	2.26%
	Emotional Maltreatment		11	0.30%
	Exposure to IPV		162	4.40%
	Caregiver - Child Conflict or Child Behaviour		17	0.46%
	Caregiver Capacity		266	7.23%
	Custody		23	0.63%
	Other		-	-
	Total	15514	2101	13.54%



Table 4 presents the recurrence rates for cases closed from on-going services (SPI 5) classified by the three most common maltreatment types at both the index and recurrence stages for the 2013/2014 fiscal year. This includes cases with the intake eligibility categories of neglect, exposure to IPV, and caregiver capacity categories. Of the 2182 caregiver capacity cases, 18.97% recurred in the 12 months following discharge: 202 (9.26%) recurred for caregiver capacity, 86 (3.94%) for exposure to IP, and 53 (2.43%) for neglect related concerns.

Table 4.

12-Month Service Recurrence (SPI-5) - Neglect, Exposure to Intimate Partner Violence, and Caregiver Capacity (2013/2014 Fiscal Year)

Intake Eligibility	Recurrence Eligibility	2013/2014		
		Denom	Num	%
Neglect	Physical Abuse	710	11	1.55%
	Sexual Abuse		5	0.70%
	Neglect		40	5.63%
	Emotional Maltreatment		-	-
	Exposure to IPV		16	2.25%
	Caregiver - Child Conflict or Child Behaviour		15	2.11%
	Caregiver Capacity		39	5.49%
	Custody		2	0.28%
Exposure to IPV	Physical Abuse	1453	26	1.79%
	Sexual Abuse		5	0.34%
	Neglect		32	2.20%
	Emotional Maltreatment		6	0.41%
	Exposure to IPV		123	8.47%
	Caregiver - Child Conflict or Child Behaviour		9	0.62%
	Caregiver Capacity		59	4.06%
	Custody		14	0.96%
Caregiver Capacity	Physical Abuse	2182	35	1.60%
	Sexual Abuse		9	0.41%
	Neglect		53	2.43%
	Emotional Maltreatment		10	0.46%
	Exposure to IPV		86	3.94%
	Caregiver - Child Conflict or Child Behaviour		17	0.78%
	Caregiver Capacity		202	9.26%
	Custody		2	0.09%
	Total		4345	816

Limitations

OCANDS collects administrative data from participating CASs. Administrative data was designed for case management. For both SPI 4 and 5, verified recurrence describes cases where a



verified investigation occurred in the 12-month period following the case closure. It is important to note that the rate of recurrence is not equivalent to the rate of re-victimization. A verification decision can mean that the family requires service, or the child was in fact victimized. The verification of risk factors does not necessarily mean that a maltreatment incident occurred.

References

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