



CIS-2008 Major Findings Supplementary Tables: Caregiver Age by Primary Substantiated Maltreatment and Risk

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Introduction

The Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect-2008 (CIS-2008) is the third nation-wide study to examine the incidence of reported child maltreatment and the characteristics of the children and families investigated by child welfare agencies in Canada. In addition to the tables presented in the Major Findings report, the Supplementary Tables Information Sheet Series describes key child, household and investigation characteristics by primary category of substantiated maltreatment including confirmed risk. This Information Sheet examines primary caregiver age.

Findings

There were an estimated 235,842 maltreatment-related investigations conducted in Canada in 2008. An estimated 174,411 investigations were for an incident of maltreatment and an estimated 61,431 were risk-only investigations. At the end of the initial investigation, 49% of maltreatment investigations were substantiated (85,440 investigations) and in 20% of risk investigations, the worker determined there was a significant risk of future maltreatment (12,018 investigations).

Table 1 displays primary caregiver age in substantiated maltreatment and confirmed risk investigations. Across all categories of substantiated maltreatment, the primary caregiver was most likely to be 31-40 years of age. In confirmed risk investigations, it was equally likely for the primary caregiver to be 22-30 years of age or 31-40 years of age. Just under 10% of confirmed risk investigations, 7% of substantiated neglect investigations, 6% of substantiated exposure to intimate partner violence (IPV) investigations, and 2% of substantiated emotional maltreatment investigations involved a primary caregiver under the age of 21. Very few

investigations involved a caregiver over the age of 60 (4% of substantiated sexual abuse investigations and 1% of substantiated neglect and confirmed risk investigations).

Table 1.

Primary caregiver age by primary category of substantiated maltreatment, including confirmed risk of future maltreatment, in Canada in 2008[^]

	Primary Category of Maltreatment												Total	
	Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to IPV		Risk			
Primary caregiver age	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
16-18	-	-	-	-	445	2%	-	-	361	1%	307	3%	1,262	1%
19-21	-	-	-	-	1,400	5%	146	2%	1,416	5%	683	6%	3,708	4%
22-30	2,836	17%	420	17%	8,474	30%	1,702	23%	11,321	39%	4,545	38%	29,298	30%
31-40	8,993	53%	1,233	49%	12,167	43%	3,107	43%	12,412	43%	4,508	38%	42,420	44%
41-50	4,133	24%	598	24%	4,666	16%	1,875	26%	3,433	12%	1,580	13%	16,285	17%
51-60	792	5%	124	5%	1,000	4%	288	4%	144	0%	186	2%	2,534	3%
>60	-	-	109	4%	332	1%	-	-	-	-	150	1%	788	1%
Total	16,989	100	2,501	100	28,484	100	7,272	100	29,124	100	11,976	100	96,346	100

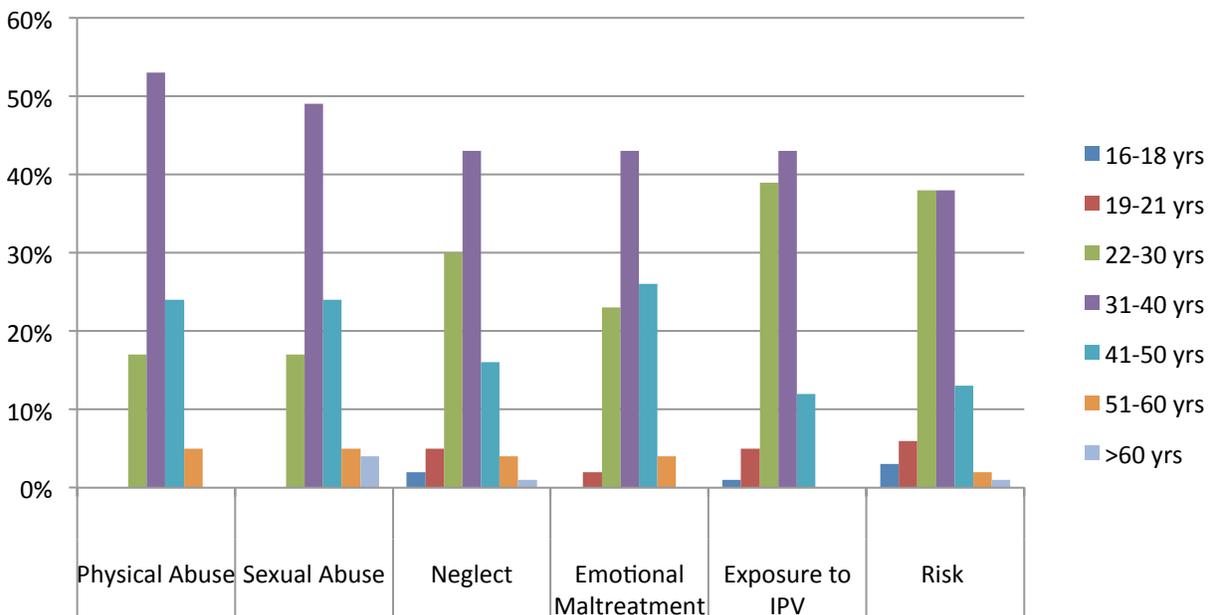
[^] Based on a sample of 6,924 substantiated child maltreatment-related investigations with information about primary caregiver age. Percentages are column percentages, but may not add to 100% because of rounding.

- Estimates of less than 100 investigations are not shown, but are included in the total.

Please see Figure 1 for a visual representation of these findings.

Figure 1.

Primary caregiver age by primary category of substantiated maltreatment, including confirmed risk of future maltreatment, in Canada in 2008[^]



Background

Responsibility for protecting and supporting children at risk of abuse and neglect falls under the jurisdiction of the 13 Canadian provinces and territories and a system of Aboriginal child welfare agencies which have increasing responsibility for protecting and supporting Aboriginal children. Because of variations in the types of situations that each jurisdiction includes under its child welfare mandate as well as differences in the way service statistics are kept, it is difficult to obtain a nation-wide profile of the children and families receiving child welfare services. The Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (CIS) is designed to provide such a profile by collecting information on a periodic basis from every jurisdiction using a standardized set of definitions. With core funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada and in-kind and financial support from a consortium of federal, provincial, territorial, Aboriginal and academic stakeholders, the CIS-2008 is the third nation-wide study of the incidence and characteristics of investigated child abuse and neglect across Canada.

Methodology

The CIS-2008 used a multi-stage sampling design to select a representative sample of 112 child welfare service agencies in Canada and then to select a sample of cases within these agencies. Information was collected directly from child welfare workers on a representative sample of 15,980 child protection investigations conducted during a three-month sampling period in the fall of 2008. This sample was weighted to reflect provincial annual estimates.

For maltreatment investigations, information was collected regarding the primary form of maltreatment investigated as well as the level of substantiation for that maltreatment. Thirty-two forms of maltreatment were listed on the data collection instrument, and these were collapsed into five broad categories: physical abuse (e.g., hit with hand), sexual abuse (e.g., exploitation), neglect (e.g., educational neglect), emotional maltreatment (e.g., verbal abuse or belittling), and exposure to intimate partner violence (e.g., direct witness to physical violence). Workers listed the primary concern for the investigation, and could also list secondary and tertiary concerns.

For each form of maltreatment listed, workers assigned a level of substantiation. Maltreatment could be substantiated (i.e., the balance of evidence indicated that the maltreatment had occurred), suspected (i.e., the maltreatment could neither be confirmed nor ruled out) or unfounded (i.e., the balance of evidence indicated that the maltreatment had not occurred).

For each risk investigation, workers determined whether the child was at significant risk of future maltreatment. The worker could decide that the child was at significant risk of future maltreatment (confirmed risk), that the child was not at significant risk of future maltreatment (unfounded risk), or that the future risk of maltreatment was unknown.

A detailed presentation of the study methodology and of the definitions of each variable is available at <http://cwrp.ca/publications/cis-2008-study-methods>.

Limitations

The CIS collects information directly from child welfare workers at the point when they completed their initial investigation of a report of possible child abuse or neglect, or risk of future maltreatment. Therefore, the scope of the study is limited to the type of information available to them at that point. The CIS does not include information about unreported maltreatment nor about cases that were investigated only by the police. Also, reports that were made to child welfare authorities but were screened out (not opened for investigation) were not included. Similarly, reports on cases currently open at the time of case selection were not included. The study did not track longer-term service events that occurred beyond the initial investigation.

Three limitations to estimation method used to derive annual estimates should also be noted. The agency size correction uses child population as a proxy for agency size; this does not account for variations in per capita investigation rates across agencies in the same strata. The annualization weight corrects for seasonal fluctuation in the volume of investigations, but it does not correct for seasonal variations in types of investigations conducted. Finally, the annualization weight includes cases that were investigated more than once in the year as a result of the case being re-opened following a first investigation completed earlier in the same year. Accordingly, the weighted annual estimates represent the child maltreatment-related investigations, rather than investigated children.

Comparisons across CIS reports must be made with caution. The forms of maltreatment tracked by each cycle were modified to take into account changes in investigation mandates and practices. Comparisons across cycles must in particular take into consideration the fact that the CIS-2008 was the first to explicitly track risk-only investigations. In addition, readers are cautioned to avoid making direct comparisons with provincial and First Nations oversampling reports because of differences in the way national and oversampling estimates are derived.

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