



Household Source of Income by Primary Form of Substantiated Maltreatment in Ontario in 2013

Rachael Lefebvre, Serena Goel, Kate Allan & Barbara Fallon
May 2015

Introduction

The Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect, 2013 (OIS-2013) is the fifth provincial study to examine the incidence of reported child maltreatment and the characteristics of children and families investigated by child welfare authorities in Ontario. This Information Sheet examines household source of income and running out of money for basic necessities by primary form of substantiated maltreatment.

Findings

There were an estimated 125,281 maltreatment-related investigations conducted in Ontario in 2013. There were an estimated 97,951 investigations involving an incident of maltreatment and an estimated 27,330 risk-only investigations. At the end of the initial investigation, 34% of maltreatment investigations were substantiated (an estimated 43,067 investigations).

Investigating workers were asked to indicate the income source that best described the primary income source for the household. Household source of income for substantiated maltreatment investigations is displayed in Table 1.

The majority of substantiated physical abuse investigations (68%), substantiated sexual abuse investigations (59%), substantiated emotional maltreatment investigations (53%), and substantiated exposure to intimate partner violence (IPV) investigations (59%), involved families with full time employment as their primary source of income. In substantiated neglect investigations, the household source of income most often noted was Employment Insurance or other benefits. Please see Figure 1 household source of income by primary form of substantiated maltreatment.

Table 1

Household source of income by primary form of substantiated maltreatment in Ontario in 2013[^]

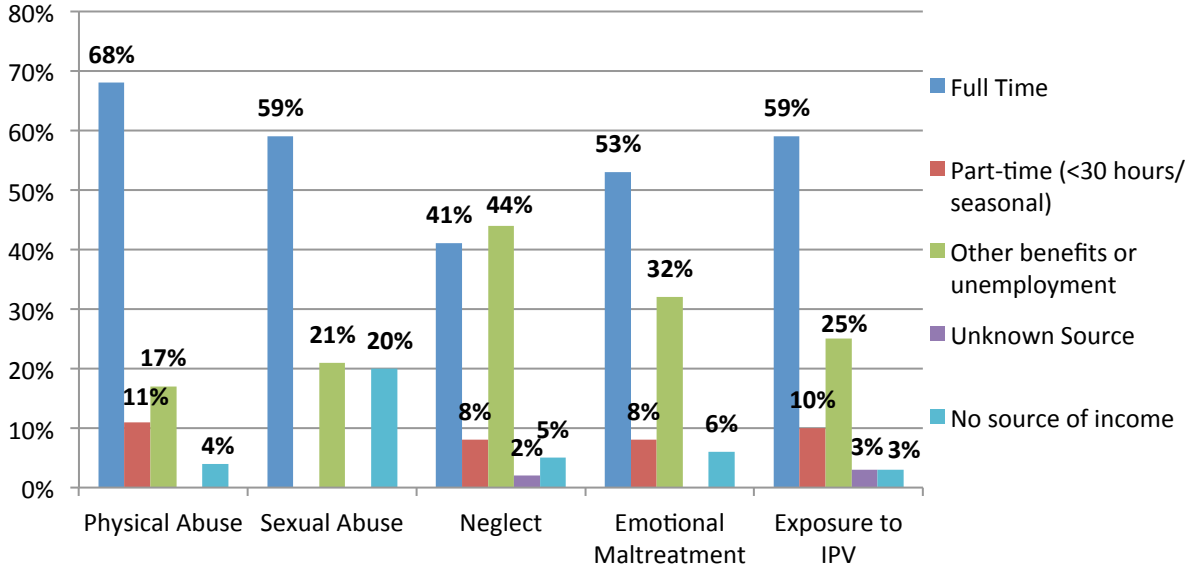
Household Source of Income	Primary Form of Maltreatment										Total	
	Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to IPV			
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Full Time	3,747	68	483	59	4,125	41	2,953	53	12,131	59	23,439	55
Part-time (<30 hours/seasonal)	605	11	-	-	788	8	453	8	2,132	10	3,978	9
Other benefits or unemployment	912	17	173	21	4,471	44	1,807	32	5,058	25	12,421	29
Unknown Source	-	-	-	-	231	2	-	-	541	3	870	2
No source of income	212	4	160	20	490	5	308	6	581	3	1,751	4
Total	5,488	100	816	100	10,105	100	5,607	100	20,443	100	42,459	100

[^] Based on a sample of 1,811 substantiated child maltreatment-related investigations with information about source of income. Percentages are column percentages, and may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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

Figure 1

Household source of income by primary form of substantiated maltreatment in Ontario in 2013



Workers were asked to indicate whether the household had run out of money for food, housing, and/or utilities in the last six months. These findings are shown in Table 2. Substantiated neglect investigations were the most likely to have a worker note that the household ran out of money for food (21%), utilities (12%), or housing (14%). Substantiated sexual abuse investigations were the least likely to have a worker indicate that the household ran out of money for food, housing or utilities in the last six months.

Table 2.

Household ran out of money for food, housing, and/or utilities in Ontario in 2013[^]

		Primary Form of Maltreatment										Total	
		Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to IPV			
In the last 6 months, household ran out of money for:		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Food	Yes	245	5	-	-	2,088	21	228	4	1,304	6	3,882	9
	No	4,405	80	533	65	6,555	65	4,696	84	17,328	85	33,517	79
	Unknown	839	15	267	33	1,461	15	683	12	1,812	9	5,062	12
Housing	Yes	127	2	-	-	1,210	12	106	2	1,076	5	36,189	85
	No	4,805	88	537	66	7,887	78	4,904	88	18,058	88	2,532	6
	Unknown	556	10	267	33	1,007	10	596	11	1,312	6	3,738	9
Utilities	Yes	101	2	-	-	1,422	14	168	3	1,191	6	2,895	7
	No	4,615	84	537	66	6,920	69	4,738	85	17,456	85	34,266	81
	Unknown	773	14	267	33	1,762	17	701	13	1,796	9	5,299	13
Total		5,489	100	817	100	10,104	100	5,607	100	20,443	100	42,459	100

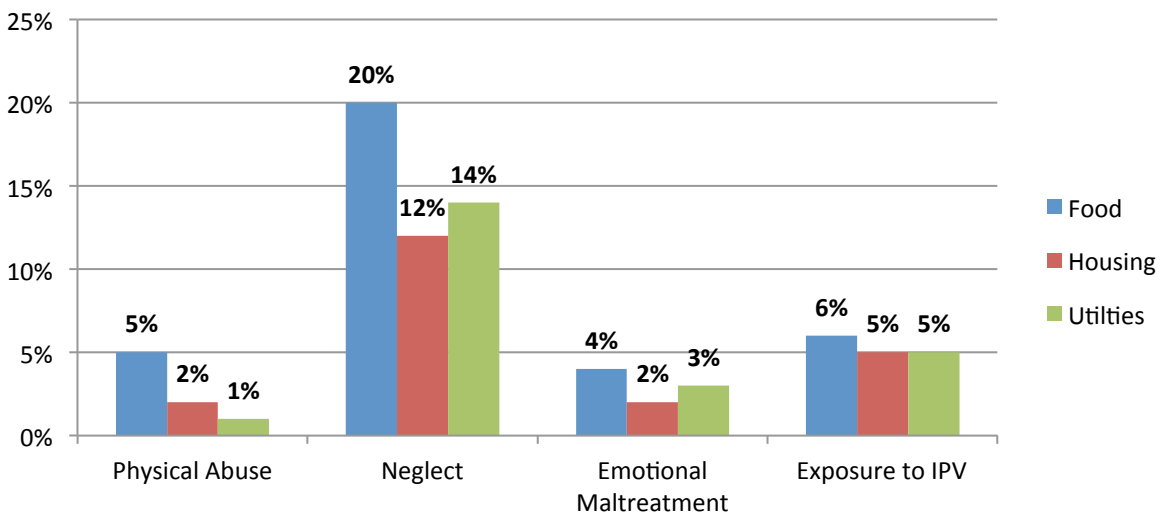
[^] Based on a sample of 1,811 substantiated child maltreatment-related investigations with information about source of income. Percentages are column percentages, and may not add to 100% due to rounding.

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

Please see Figure 2 for a visual representation of these findings. Substantiated sexual abuse is not included by household runs out of money for food, housing or utilities because of low frequencies.

Figure 2.

Household ran out of money for food, housing, and/or utilities in Ontario in 2013



Background

Due to changes in investigation mandates and practices over the last 15 years, the OIS-2008 and OIS-2013 differed from previous cycles in that they tracked both risk-only investigations and maltreatment investigations. Risk-only investigations were those in which a specific past incident of maltreatment was not suspected or alleged to have occurred, but rather a constellation of factors lead to concerns that a child may be maltreated in the future (e.g., caregiver with a substance abuse issue).

Methodology

The OIS-2013 used a multi-stage sampling design to select a representative sample of 17 child welfare agencies in Ontario and then to select a sample of cases within these agencies. Information was collected directly from child protection workers on a representative sample of 5,265 child protection investigations conducted during a three-month sampling period in 2013. This sample was weighted to reflect provincial annual estimates. After two weighting procedures were applied to the data, the estimated number of maltreatment-related investigations (i.e., maltreatment and risk-only investigations) conducted in Ontario in 2013 was 125,281.

For maltreatment investigations, information was collected regarding the primary form of maltreatment investigated as well as the level of substantiation for that maltreatment (substantiated, suspected, or unfounded). 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 (IPV) (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 risk investigation, workers determined whether the child was at risk of future maltreatment. The worker could decide that the child was at risk of future maltreatment (confirmed risk), that the child was not at risk of future maltreatment (unfounded risk), or that the future risk of maltreatment was unknown.

Workers were asked to provide information on various other aspects of their investigation, including the characteristics of the household, caregivers, and child subject of the investigation, the history of previous child welfare case openings, and the short-term child welfare service dispositions.

Limitations

The OIS 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 OIS 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 OIS 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 OIS-2008 was the first to explicitly track risk-only investigations.

Suggested citation: Lefebvre, R., Goel, S., Allan, K. & Fallon, B. (2015). Household Source of Income by Primary Form of Substantiated Maltreatment in Ontario 2013. CWRP Information Sheet #159E. Toronto, ON: Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto.