

THE ARCHIVE

UPDATA FILE

Family Life Development Center, Cornell University

Spring 1992

CHILD MALTREATMENT AND ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

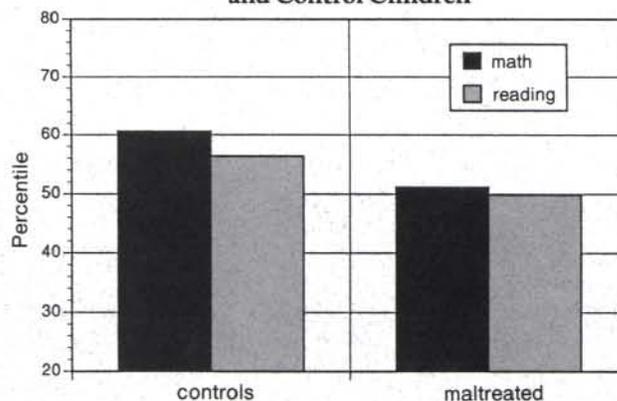
One of the data sets available through the archive is entitled "Maltreatment and the Academic and Social Adjustment of School Children." The data were collected through Cornell University under the direction of John Eckenrode and Molly Laird. The goal of the study was to determine the effects of child abuse and neglect on academic achievement and social adjustment in the school setting. Numerous studies have begun to document the deleterious role of child abuse and neglect in cognitive and social development, but few large scale studies have examined academic outcomes while utilizing appropriate controls.

The study took place in a small city in New York State. The population of interest were 8,569 children attending public schools (grades K to 12) in 1987-88. The records of the New York State Child Abuse and Maltreatment Register were searched for reports of maltreatment for each of these children. This search yielded a group of 1,239 children (14.5%) each of whom had at least one known incident of

maltreatment at some time in their lives. This article focuses on 420 maltreated children (neglected, physically abused, or sexually abused) sampled from the total group of maltreated children who were in regular classrooms (i.e., not in special education classrooms). These children were matched with a group of 420 children of the same gender, grade in school, school, residential location, and when possible classroom. Social service records were used to derive measures of maltreatment type and timing, as well as whether each family (maltreated and control) was receiving public assistance. School records were the source of measures of academic performance (standardized test scores, grades, and grade repetition), as well as other variables discussed in this paper, such as gender, age, number of siblings, school transfers, and home moves.

For children taking standardized tests (Iowa tests) within the last two years (primarily 2nd through 9th

Figure 1
Iowa Reading and Math Scores for Maltreated and Control Children



grades), maltreated children scored significantly lower than their non-maltreated peers on reading and math (see Figure 1). These effects remained significant when the public assistance status of the family was controlled, indicating that these effects were independent of the effects of poverty. For both sets of scores, the effects of maltreatment did not vary as a function of gender, grade level, or public assistance status. The effects of maltreatment, however, varied significantly across types of maltreatment. Neglected children had the lowest test scores among maltreated children, while sexually abused children did not differ from the comparison group.

Data on grades conform to these general findings, with maltreated children receiving significantly more C's and D's and fewer A's and B's than the comparison group. As with test

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USING THE ARCHIVE

The National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect exists to serve the data needs of scholars and practitioners who are concerned about the maltreatment of children. The Archive is a centralized facility that acquires, processes, preserves, and disseminates high quality data sets relevant to the study of child abuse and neglect whose major purpose is to facilitate the secondary analysis of existing research data. Details on using the Archive are described inside.

CURRENT HOLDINGS

Bolton F.G., Jr. (1985) Maricopa County, Arizona Study of Child Maltreatment Risk Among Adolescent Mothers *

This study examines whether the incidence of child maltreatment was higher among natural children born to adolescent mothers, compared to that obtained for children born to post-adolescent mothers. A random sample of 5,098 observations was drawn from the child maltreatment cases referred to the Maricopa County unit of child protective services in Arizona between 1/1/76 - 12/31/78.

Eckenrode, J. and Doris, J. (1985) Substantiation of Child Abuse and Neglect Reports

This study identifies factors that significantly increase or decrease the likelihood that a child maltreatment report will be substantiated once an investigation occurs. A specific concern of the study was to investigate the size and nature of the difference in substantiation rates for reports originating from professional sources mandated by law to report suspected cases of child maltreatment compared to reports from non-professional sources, such as relatives and neighbors. A representative sample of 796 sexual abuse, 198 physical abuse and 880 neglect reports were obtained from the New York State Child Abuse and Maltreatment Register. Types of data collected included background variables, such as sex and age of the subject child; the source of the report; actions that took place after the report was filed (e.g., court action), and the case determination.

Eckenrode, J. and Laird, M. (1989) Maltreatment and the Academic and Social Adjustment of School Children

A major goal of this study was to explore the extent to which child abuse and neglect are associated with deficits in school performance and social adjustment in the school setting. Data were derived from a population of 8600 enrolled public school children in a rural upstate New York community. A review of the State Central Register records showed that 1400 of the 8600 school children had indicated cases of abuse or neglect. Data were obtained for 500 abused and neglected youth and 500 matched controls (including achievement tests, grades, educational services, attendance, mobility, behavioral problems).

Lewis, I.A. (1985) Los Angeles Times Poll

This opinion study was designed to determine the prevalence of childhood sexual abuse among a national sample of adult men and women and to identify characteristics of victims and risk factors associated with childhood sexual victimization. The sampling frame included all residential telephones in the United States. 2629 men and women 18 years or older were contacted by telephone during an eight day period in July of 1985. Knowledge and attitudes about sexual abuse were ascertained and information was gathered about the respondents' personal life circumstances.

NCCAN (1980) National Study of the Incidence and Severity of Child Abuse and Neglect

Conducted by NCCAN and mandated by Congress, this study is the first large scale effort to assemble information, based on standardized definitions, about the scope and character of recognized child abuse and neglect in the United States. From findings obtained in a probability sample of 26 counties in 10 states, national estimates are derived of the numbers and characteristics of abused and neglected children who: a) are referred to CPS agencies for investigation, b) are not referred to CPS but are known to other investigatory agencies which may handle abuse/neglect situations (e.g., police, court, public health depts, etc.) or c) are not known to either but are identifiable from other community institutions, particularly schools and hospitals.

NCCAN (1988) Study of National Incidence and Prevalence of Child Abuse and Neglect

The purpose of the Second National Incidence Study was to assess the current national incidence of child abuse and neglect, and to determine how the severity, frequency, and character of child maltreatment changed since the First National Incidence Study. As a follow-up to the First National Incidence Study, this study followed essentially the same design.

Office of Human Development Services/ACYF (1989) Youth Information Form Data from Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs

These data were gathered from federally funded runaway and homeless youth shelters during 1988-1989. Data were collected on approximately 40,000 youth who received services from runaway and homeless youth programs. The following types of information are included in the data set: demographic characteristics, youth and family presenting problems at intake (including history of abuse and neglect), and services provided by the shelter.

Straus, M. and Gelles, R. The 1975 National Family Violence Survey

This study was conducted in 1976 at the University of New Hampshire. 2134 respondents were interviewed in a nationwide sample of 960 males and 1183 females. The purpose of the study was to ascertain methods of conflict resolution within the family. Information was gathered regarding the following areas: resolution of conflicts between spouses and between parents and children, including detailed information on the development of conflicts resulting in violence, resolution of conflicts in respondent's childhood family, family power structure, marital closeness and stability, personality, and stress factors.

Straus, M. and Gelles, R. (1985) Physical Violence in American Families - A Resurvey

A representative national sample of 6002 families were studied with an emphasis on the psychological and medical consequences, and costs of intra-family violence, and help-seeking patterns. The study is a follow-up to the 1975 National Family Violence Survey (Straus and Gelles).

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DATA AVAILABLE FOR PC USERS

Current Holdings *continued from page 2*

Widom Spatz, Cathy (1967-1988) Child Abuse, Neglect, and Violent Criminal Behavior in a Midwest Metropolitan Area of the United States**

These data examine the relationships between childhood abuse and/or neglect and later criminal and violent criminal behavior. In particular, the data focus on whether being a victim of violence and/or neglect in early childhood leads to being a criminal offender in adolescence or early adulthood and whether a relationship exists between childhood abuse or neglect and arrests as a juvenile, arrests as an adult, and arrests for violent offenses. The data set includes approximately 1000 cases of adults and juveniles with criminal histories and with backgrounds of abuse or neglect. There is also a matched control group with no official record of abuse or neglect.

Zuravin, Susan J. (1984-1985) Fer- tility and Contraception Among Low-Income Child Abusing and Neglecting Mothers in Baltimore, MD*

This study examined fertility patterns and contracepting behaviors of mothers who either neglect, physically abuse, or allow someone else to physically abuse their children. The 518 women in the sample were residents of Baltimore in January of 1984, received Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), were known to have at least one natural child 12 or under, and were not living with a legally wedded spouse. The sample was broken down into three groups: 118 women with one or more physically abused children, 119 women who were known to personally neglect one or more children, and 281 women who were not known to have any children who met study criteria for abuse or neglect.

* Order directly from the Data Archive on Adolescent Pregnancy and Pregnancy prevention (DAAPPP) Sociometrics Corporation 170 State Street, Suite 260, Los Altos, CA 94922-2812 (415) 949-3282.

** Order directly from the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) PO Box 1248, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1248 (313) 763-5010

The Archive is currently in the process of preparing its holdings for dissemination on floppy diskettes to microcomputer based users. We are starting by preparing data sets for use on two popular PC statistical packages: SAS and SPSS. SPSS files will be made available for both Macintosh and IBM compatible systems. SAS files will be prepared for IBM compatibles running either DOS or OS/2. All files will be distributed in portable (a.k.a. export) format. Portable files are standardized (80 column ASCII) versions of system files which can travel between software versions and different operating systems. These files retain all of the information stored in system files and are easily converted to system files with a short program.

Currently three of the archives holdings are being disseminated to microcomputer users:

- ★ Maltreatment and the Academic and Social Adjustment of School Children
- ★ Los Angeles Times Poll
- ★ Substantiation of Child Abuse and Neglect Reports

New data sets will become available on a rolling basis as the project continues. If there is another archive holding you would like to have prepared for use on a PC, or if you would like to have a data set prepared for use on a microcomputer system not mentioned above, let us know. We will do our best to honor such requests. However, it is anticipated that some of the archive's holdings will not be made available because of the constraints of PC-based systems and that support will be primarily for SPSS and SAS systems.

Now available from the Archive

★ *The Preparation of Data Sets for Analysis and Dissemination: Technical Standards for Machine-Readable Data*

This document was developed by the Archive in response to one of the most common obstacles to sharing social science research data: poorly documented and maintained data files. It is intended as a guide to all researchers whose projects result in machine-readable data, to help them maintain and preserve their own data. Technical requirements for formatting and documenting machine-readable data files are set forth, and standards and procedures for data processing are described. This document should not only assist investigators use their own data, but also enable other researchers

to understand and work with the data. Topics included in the document include: tape recording standards, data types, confidentiality, file organization, standardization of data codes, abstract construction, documentation, and codebook development. Data sharing will be facilitated in the field of child abuse and neglect if researchers prepare their data following these guidelines in the early stages of the research process.

Copies of this document are available free of charge from the Archive (see attached order form).

*Funding for the Archive is provided
by grant 90-CA-1370 from the Na-
tional Center on Child Abuse and
Neglect, United States Department
of Health and Human Services.*



Child Maltreatment and Academic Outcomes

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scores, maltreatment had an effect independent of the child's age, number of siblings, or public assistance status. Neglected children had the lowest grades among the maltreated students, and the grades of sexually abused children did not differ from those of non-maltreated children. Maltreated children were also 2.5 times more likely to repeat a grade than non-maltreated children, with neglected and physically abused children having significantly more repetitions than control children.

Maltreatment was also associated with problems of social adjustment in the school setting. For maltreated children, the cumulative number of referrals to the principal for discipline was almost twice that of non-maltreated children (1.9 vs. 1.0; $p < .001$). This difference remained significant in a regression analysis that controlled for age, number of siblings, and public assistance status of the family. Maltreatment also interacted with grade level, with the effect of maltreatment being more pronounced among junior and senior high students. Maltreatment also interacted with public assistance status, with the largest maltreatment effect found for children from families not on public assistance. The maltreatment effect did not vary by gender. The largest number of referrals was found among physically abused and neglected children, while sexually abused children did not differ from the non-maltreated controls.

Focusing on junior and senior high school students, maltreated students had significantly more suspensions than their non-maltreated peers (1.9 vs. .4; $p < .01$), controlling for background variables. Similar to discipline referrals, physically abused children had the most suspensions (see Figure 2). Neglected and sexually abused children did not differ from controls.

The results of this study demonstrate that child abuse and neglect represents a significant risk factor for poor academic performance. This general conclusion is consistent with smaller and less well-controlled studies which have examined academic achievement among maltreated children. The study also complements research with pre-school children showing adverse effects of maltreatment on cognitive and socio-emotional development. From this study it can be concluded that:

- (1) The effects of maltreatment can be seen across a number of indicators of academic achievement and across subject areas.
- (2) The effects of maltreatment were evident even after matching on several background variables and statistically controlling for additional variables. As such, the differences observed cannot be attributed to background differences between maltreated and non-maltreated children.
- (3) Neglected and physically abused children showed the poorest out-

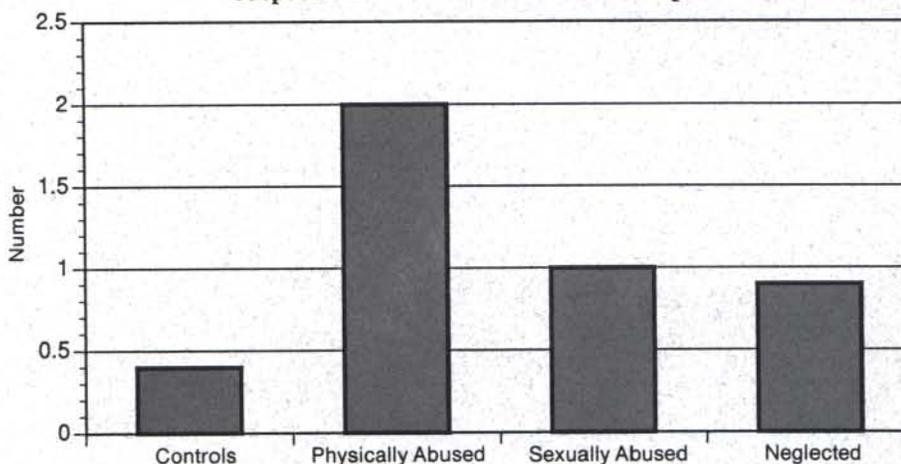
comes, with sexually abused children achieving at a level not significantly different than control children. This suggests that more attention should be given to neglected children who are often not the focus of systematic research, but who represent by far the greatest number of maltreated children being served by the social services system.

(4) For most outcomes, maltreatment affected girls and boys equally, and was evident across all grade levels. For most outcomes, maltreatment effects also did not vary between children receiving public assistance and those not receiving assistance. These findings indicate that the effects of maltreatment on academic achievement cross gender, age, and social class lines.

The results confirm the often-cited impression that maltreated children are over-represented among those students experiencing academic difficulty. This study provides more specific details regarding this association, and as such, may well be helpful to school officials in their attempts to design programming to meet the needs of these at-risk students.

Reference: Eckenrode, J., Laird, M., & Doris, J. (in press). School performance and disciplinary problems among abused and neglected children. *Developmental Psychology*.

Figure 2
Suspensions Across Maltreatment Groups



PLEASE RETURN USER SURVEYS!

The Archive recently conducted a User Survey to find out both how our products have been used and to determine the needs of child maltreatment researchers. If you received a copy of the survey, please return it to us as soon as possible!

The Archive welcomes your suggestions. Let us know what kinds of data and services would best meet your research needs.

ORDER FORM

National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect
Cornell University
Family Life Development Center, MVR Hall
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PHONE: 607-255-7794 FAX: 607-255-8562

Spring 1992

I would like to order the following Data Sets (\$50 for the first Data Set; \$25 for each additional Data Set in same order; \$15 for documentation only).

Eckenrode, J. and Doris, J. Substantiation of Child Abuse and Neglect Reports

Tape Diskette Documentation only

Eckenrode, J. and Laird, M. Maltreatment & the Academic & Social Adjustment of School Children

Tape Diskette Documentation only

Lewis, I.A. Los Angeles Times Poll

Tape Diskette Documentation only

NCCAN National Study of the Incidence and Severity of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS-1)

Tape Documentation only

NCCAN Study of National Incidence and Prevalence of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS-2)

Tape Documentation only

OHDS/ACYF Youth Information Form Data from Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs

Tape Documentation only

Straus, M. and Gelles, R. The 1975 National Family Violence Survey

Tape Documentation only

Straus, M. and Gelles, R. Physical Violence in American Families: A Re-survey

Tape Documentation only

Data are available in a variety of formats for micro and mainframe computers. Please complete the contact form below and one of our staff members will call you to discuss the specific way you need to receive the data.

Please send me a free copy of *The Preparation of Data Sets for Analysis and Dissemination: Technical Guidelines for Machine-Readable Data*

Please add me to the Archive's mailing list

NAME: _____

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TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____

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SHIPPING ADDRESS: (include number, street, city, state, and zip code):

(Purchaser agrees that acquired data will be used for scientific research or statistical purposes only)

RECENT ACQUISITION

The National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children (NISMAART) David Finkelhor, Gerry Hotaling, and Andrea Sedlak (1990)

NISMAART was designed to estimate the incidence of five categories of children who 1) were abducted by family members; 2) were abducted by non-family members; 3) had run away from home; 4) had been thrown away by their caretakers; and 5) were missing for some other reason, e.g., because they had gotten lost or injured. Mandated by Congress, NISMAART was implemented under the auspices of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) in 1987. The major goal of NISMAART was to gather evidence on which to base sound scientifically generated estimates for these different categories of missing children using clear and consensual definitions and procedures that could be replicated by other researchers.

NISMAART actually consists of six separate studies, all of which are available from the Archive:

★ *Household Survey*. A telephone survey of 34,822 randomly selected households, yielding interviews with 10,544 caretakers of 20,505 children, to determine the number of children in these households that had been abducted, run away, thrown away, lost, or otherwise missing.

★ *Juvenile Facilities Survey*. A survey of residential facilities for children to find out how many had run away from placement.

★ *Returned Runaway Study*. An interview study with children who had run away and returned home to determine the congruence between the accounts of children and their parents with regard to possible runaway episodes.

★ *Police Records Study*. A study of police records in 83 law enforcement agencies in a national random sample of 21 counties to find out how many non-family abduction episodes were reported to these agencies.

★ *FBI Data Reanalysis*. Reanalysis of FBI data to determine the number of children murdered in conjunction with possible abductions by strangers.

★ *Community Professionals Study*. A study of 735 agencies that have contact with children in a national random sample of 29 counties to determine how many children known to these agencies have been abandoned or thrown away.

A number of publications have resulted from NISMAART that describe the initial study findings and the various methodologies employed by the study investigators. For a listing of reference materials and products produced as a result of NISMAART contact: AAD-NISMAART, Program Manager, Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 633 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20531 or call at 202-307-5929.

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