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# UPDATE

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Family Life Development Center, New York State College of Human Ecology, Cornell University

## School-Age and Adolescent Children's Perceptions of Family Functioning in Neglectful and Non-Neglectful Families

By Sara Gable, Ph.D.

*Editors Note: The research presented in the following article was conducted using a dataset which is available from NDACAN (Study Number 066). The author was also a participant in the 1996 NDACAN Summer Research Institute.*

As the incidence of child neglect in the U.S. continues to climb (Sedlak & Broadhurst, 1996), family scientists recognize that gaps persist in our knowledge of how children's development is affected by parental neglect (e.g., Dubowitz, 1994). One gap concerns neglected children's perceptions of their own family life. Understanding how neglect influences children's thoughts about family functioning in their own homes may enhance intervention efforts for neglected children (Gaudin, 1993), especially those aimed at reducing the risk for the intergenerational transmission of neglectful parenting.

Past research has revealed that neglected children are at risk for a number of behavioral, social, and academic problems. These problems appear early in life and persist across childhood and the school years. For example, neglected infants are at a greater risk for anxious/resistant attachment relationships with their mothers (Egeland & Sroufe, 1981) and neglected preschoolers often exhibit behavior problems, aggression toward peers, and poor school readiness (Hoffman-Plotkin & Twentyman, 1984). Additionally, during elementary and secondary school, neglected children may earn lower mathematics, language, and reading scores than their abused and

non-maltreated agemates (Eckenrode, Laird, & Doris, 1993). Although these studies tell us how children's development is influenced by neglectful parenting, the question remains: How does parental neglect contribute to children's perceptions of their own family's functioning?

One way to address this issue is to examine consistency in different reporters' ratings of family functioning in neglectful and non-neglectful families. Community standards define unacceptable parenting practices and allow for outsiders to perceive and act on

observed inadequacies in family functioning. The question, however, is whether children from neglectful families also see these critical differences. And, in turn, whether these perceptions serve to protect neglected children or to put them at greater risk. If neglected children do not discern inadequate supervision or unmet basic needs, will they be at greater risk for repeating these patterns of neglectful parenting? Conversely, if neglected children recognize that their family

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## NIS-3 Public Use Files Now Available

By Rebecca Sawyer, M.S.

The Public Use Files for the Third National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS-3) are now available for secondary analysis. As with the first two national incidence studies the NIS-3 was sponsored by the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN) and conducted by Westat, Inc. of Rockville, Maryland. Those interested in the NIS-3 study findings will want to obtain a copy of the final report which is available from the NCCAN Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information (Phone: 800-FYI-3366). The NIS-3 Public Use Files and documentation are distributed by NDACAN. Technical support will also be provided by the Archive.

The NIS-3 Public Use Dataset is available in a variety of file formats for use with different types of computers and software packages. Those interested in obtaining the dataset should visit the NDACAN website (<http://www.ndacan.cornell.edu>) to complete an order form and a Terms of Use Agreement. While the order form information may be submitted by phone or E-mail, we require a signed Terms of Use Agreement via U.S. mail along with payment before data files can be sent. Users without Internet access are encouraged to contact us by phone (607-255-7799) for these forms.

*Rebecca Sawyer is the Acquisitions Manager of the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect at Cornell University.*

# Guidelines for NDACAN Data Users

By Patrick T. Collins and  
John Eckenrode, Ph.D.

The secondary analysis process requires the same careful attention to detail as primary data collection and analysis. In addition, secondary data users have unique responsi-

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bilities to the Archive and the principal investigators of the datasets with which they work. However, because secondary data are already collected, coded, and computerized it is tempting to jump right in and begin data analysis. Additionally, many secondary data users are unclear about their responsibilities to the data supplier since these vary depending on the source of the data.

Our experience has shown that users who carefully review the literature, formulate their research questions, and thoroughly familiarize themselves with the study and dataset prior to beginning their analyses are far more successful than those who try to save time by starting their analyses without such preparation. This brief article outlines the major steps in a secondary analysis project and highlights the user's responsibilities at each stage of the process. While the secondary analysis process we outline is applicable to data from a wide variety of sources, the responsibilities described here pertain specifically to users of NDACAN data.

As with any study, it is important to develop research questions based on theory and a careful reading of the published literature. Once you have developed your questions the Archive staff can help you identify a dataset that meets your needs. If NDACAN does not have an appropriate dataset we will refer you to other archives such as the Inter-University Consortium for Social and Political Research. We can also give you information about professional listservs dedicated to data archiving that can be used to locate secondary data sources. A good place to start your search for a dataset is the NDACAN home page ([www.ndacan.cornell.edu](http://www.ndacan.cornell.edu)). There you will find extensive information on the Archive's holdings as well as links to the web sites of other data suppliers.

Once you identify a dataset that meets your needs you will need to gain access to it. If you are ordering data from NDACAN, this involves choosing the type of media and file formats you want, filling out an order form, completing a terms of use agreement, and submitting payment (See, "Ordering Data and Documentation from the Archive" on page 10 for more information). The archive staff will assist you with getting the data up and running

on your computer and making sense of the data documentation.

After obtaining a dataset it is essential that you read the articles and reports published directly from the dataset and familiarize yourself more generally with the substantive area of research. All NDACAN user's guides contain a bibliography of publications resulting from and related to the dataset. All users are strongly encouraged to read these articles. (The archive cannot, because of copyright law, distribute copies of these publications to users.) It is also important to familiarize yourself with the methodology of the study, the measures used, the way in which variables were coded, and how the study's datasets were created. Most of this information is included in the user's guide although, in some cases, it may be necessary to obtain the final report for the study.

The next step is to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the dataset and determine the analytic techniques that will be most appropriate. It is not uncommon to find that, upon closer inspection, a dataset does not contain exactly what you need or is not suited to the type of analysis you had hoped to pursue. Thus it is important to fully understand the contents of the dataset before beginning analysis. After these assessments are made, you should begin with descriptive analyses of existing variables. The archive has developed a publication entitled, *A Checklist for Preliminary Secondary Data Analysis* which will be of aid to users at this stage of their work.

Replicating the results of previously published work is an important but often overlooked step in the secondary analysis process that serves several important purposes. First, it confirms that the dataset itself is accurate and has not been disturbed or altered in transmission. Equally important, it ensures that the user understands how to properly manipulate the dataset. It is not necessary to reproduce all the findings of previous work but replicating basic analyses will help to ensure that new analyses are properly implemented.

After completing these steps, the user can confidently begin their own analy-

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## Archive News

### Data Use Agreements

All researchers are now required to sign and submit a Terms of Use Agreement prior to receiving data. Designed to inform researchers of their responsibilities and to ensure appropriate use of materials distributed by NDACAN, the Agreement can be downloaded from our Web server (<http://www.ndacan.cornell.edu>) or received by mail upon request. The completed Terms of Use Agreement must be returned by U.S. mail (faxed copies are not accepted) along with an order form and payment.

### Dataset prices

In order to help offset the cost of materials, the price for datasets has been

raised to \$75 each. "Documentation Only" orders are now \$25. Students are eligible for the discount rate of \$25 per dataset. Documentation for most datasets is also available free of charge on our Web server.

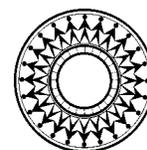
### New Staff

In November the Archive welcomed two new staff members:

**Rebecca Sawyer** joined the staff as Acquisitions Manager, filling the position formerly occupied by Lisa King. Becky earned her Master's Degree from Cornell's Division of Nutritional Science in 1996 where she gained experience in data management and statistical analysis. Becky will work on data acquisitions and, in particular, with

NCCAN Grantees who are required to archive their data.

**Andrés Arroyo** joined us as Administrative Assistant filling the position formerly occupied by Andrea Beukenkamp. Andrés is a 1996 graduate from the Cornell University College of Arts and Sciences. Andrés' responsibilities include handling subscriptions to the listerv, administering our WWW Server, coordinating our mailing list and responding to requests for information.



## Results of the Child-Maltreatment-Research-L Survey

By Patrick T. Collins

While the primary activity of the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect is archiving and disseminating datasets, part of our mission involves creating networking and training opportunities for researchers. As such, we sponsor training workshops at national and international conferences and run an annual summer research institute at Cornell. One thing we have learned from running these workshops is that opportunities for cross-disciplinary communication and collaboration are quite limited. One of the most valuable aspects of our summer research institute is the opportunity to collaborate and share perspectives with researchers from a wide range of professional backgrounds. Participants in our first summer institute appreciated this so much that they asked us if we could do more to promote communication among researchers in the field. In response we considered the possibility of creating an on-line discussion group or e-conference. This type of forum has the potential of eliminating some of the traditional barriers to communication such as geographic isolation and differing fields of study. Furthermore, we felt that an on-line discussion group would provide opportunities for enhanced networking, cross fertilization of research, increased information sharing and access, and benefit the field as a whole.

With these ambitious goals the Child Maltreatment Research Listserv (CMRL) was established in November 1993. During the first two years CMRL grew rapidly and received accolades from many enthusiastic subscribers. At the same time the list experienced several of the problems endemic to such forums including controversial submissions, inappropriate replies and irrelevant information. After much deliberation over these problems began to moderate the list in August, 1995. Since then the subscriber base has grown rapidly and the list now has over 700 subscribers. While its large subscriber base and longevity imply some degree of success, we nonetheless wanted to know exactly how the list was being used and what benefits subscribers were experiencing. Thus, in May 1996 we conducted an evaluation of CMRL to determine whether it was fulfilling its mission.

### Methodology

The primary component of the evaluation was a survey which was sent to all current CMRL subscribers via electronic mail. The survey contained 43 questions covering a broad range of topics including, demographics, posting behavior, satisfaction with the list, suggestions for improvement, interaction with other subscribers, professional activities, advantages and disadvantages of subscription and specific benefits related to the subscribers' work. The overall response rate to the

survey was 52%. While the response rate was not as high as we had hoped, it is excellent for this type of survey.

### Demographics

Most CMRL Respondents (82%) lived in the United States; foreign subscribers were concentrated in English speaking countries such as Canada, England, New Zealand, and Australia. Within the U.S. all regions were equally represented and respondents came from 42 states. Men and women were represented nearly equally with a slightly greater proportion of women in the sample (56%). Age was normally distributed with mean of 42 and a standard deviation of 9.

The sample was highly educated; 52% had completed doctoral work and 87% had obtained a graduate degree. More than half of the respondents (55%) identified their primary profession as research; other respondents were teachers (10%), Clinicians (10%), students (6%), CPS professionals (6%), and administrators (4%). The most common workplace was a university (58%); Other settings included state and federal government agencies (14%), human service agencies (8%), hospitals (7%), and private offices (4%). Respondents also reported the length of their experience working in the child maltreatment field which varied from 0 to 30 years with a median of 8 years.

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## Results of the Child-Maltreatment-Research-L Survey

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Overall, these findings indicate that CMRL subscribers were diverse in age, gender, and geography. While researchers in university settings predominated, other professions and types of organizations were also represented.

### Professional Activities

Results showed that 82% of the sample had been involved in conducting research within the last three years. Of these respondents 80% had worked on a project related to child maltreatment. Almost all respondents had attended a national conference and subscribed to a professional journal in the last three years. Most subscribers had presented a paper or workshop at a national or regional conference in the same time frame. The final question in this section related to published work in the last three years: 52% had published an article in a peer-reviewed journal, 30% published a book chapter, and 11% published a book.

Taken together these findings revealed a subscriber base of active researchers with considerable experience in the child maltreatment field. Most CMRL subscribers were actively contributing to the field through presentations and publications.

### Subscriber Interaction

Twelve survey questions concerned communication with other CMRL subscribers. Unfortunately these questions were only asked of respondents who had posted a message to the list — exactly half of all survey respondents. In designing the survey we failed to recognize that many of the lurkers on the list engage in significant communication with other subscribers by responding directly to their postings.

Those who had posted a message were asked about the helpfulness of the replies they received. 46% indicated that the responses were very helpful, 53% said they were somewhat helpful, and only 2% said they were not helpful. Because our anecdotal evidence indicated that a considerable amount of interaction occurred off the list, we asked how most responses were received — via the list, by direct E-mail, or both. 47% indicated that most responses were sent directly to them, 19% said most were sent to the list, and 22% said the amount was about equal. We

had also heard that the responses received directly were often of better quality so we asked respondents to rate the helpfulness of responses received directly vs. those sent to the list. As we suspected, most respondents (75%) found direct responses as helpful or more helpful than replies to the list; only 3% found direct replies less helpful. Not surprisingly 21% said they could not remember.

One measure of whether CMRL increased interaction among researchers is whether communication extended beyond the context of the list. We asked survey respondents if their communication with other subscribers on the list had led to other types of communication. Almost half (47%) reported that list contact led to a phone call, 60% had communicated by U.S. mail, 14% by fax, and 3% had a face to face meeting.

The findings from this section of the survey indicate that CMRL subscription did increase interaction among researchers. About half of all subscribers had posted a message but a much larger number had communicated with other subscribers by contacting them directly. For many subscribers interaction on the list led to communication with other subscribers by telephone, U.S. mail, or fax.

These data also strongly support our hypothesis that a great deal of communication between subscribers takes place off the list. Approximately half of all responses to postings were received directly and messages received directly were considered as helpful or more helpful than those posted to the list. This high level of off-list traffic may be due, in part, to the emphasis we have placed as owners on not replying inappropriately to the list. This was particularly important prior to moderation because messages intended for individual subscribers were often sent to the list. The downside of this off-list traffic is that subscribers who are interested in the responses to a particular posting may do not see all of the replies. As a partial solution we request that subscribers who initiate discussions summarize and post the replies that they receive back to the list.

### Effects on Subscribers' Work

Our greatest hopes in creating the list were that subscribers would form new relationships and that subscription to the list would directly benefit subscrib-

ers' work. The final section of the survey addressed both of these issues.

Relationships among subscribers were of particular interest to us. We wanted to know whether new collaborators were identified and/or whether existing relationships were enhanced. One third of respondents indicated that they had formed a new relationship as a result of communication on the list. These relationships were categorized as follows. New contacts were cited most often (25%), followed by new colleagues (13%), and new collaborators (4%).

When asked whether CMRL had directly contributed to their work, 76% of subscribers said yes. An open-ended question asked these respondents how the list contributed to their work. Many respondents provided detailed examples. For instance, one respondent indicated that feedback received from subscribers facilitated the development of an informed consent procedure for a difficult study. Another subscriber developed new research questions based on unpublished work identified through the list. Open-ended coding of these responses revealed the following:

23%	Found Needed Information / Resources
21%	Found References
11%	Helped Refine or Expand Research Questions
11%	Kept up to Date with Field
8%	Made Contacts
8%	Contributed to a Research Project
8%	Improved Study Methods / Design
7%	Contributed to a Research Proposal
7%	Accessed Unpublished Work
5%	Improved Study Measurement
26%	Other

These findings revealed that CMRL is accomplishing its mission. We are gratified to see that so many new relationships were formed and that subscribers feel their work is benefiting from their participation on the list. We hope that this kind of activity continues to grow and that the results of this survey further encourage researchers in the field to take advantage of this valuable resource.

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# Certificates of Confidentiality

By Rebecca Sawyer, M.S.

Certificates of Confidentiality were originally designed to protect the identity of subjects of drug and alcohol abuse studies who could have been involved in illegal activities. Their use was broadened in 1988 to allow for the protection of other types of research subjects. When obtained by researchers, they relieve their holders from the obligation to comply with compulsory legal demands for data. Despite the availability of this safeguard for subjects involved in sensitive research, there have been very few requests to federal agencies for such protection. This may be due to a lack of awareness of how such certificates work or where to obtain them.

Certificates of Confidentiality, obtained prior to data collection, will permanently protect data from subpoena and other legal demands. Importantly, research data collected under a Certifi-

cate is protected for all researchers who use the data. The research need not be federally funded.

Researchers are currently eligible for a Certificate if their research addresses a sensitive issue, such as child maltreatment, and includes direct identifiers such as names, social security numbers or addresses. Currently, datasets which contain only indirect identifiers (e.g. birthdates, geographic identifiers and information on ethnicity) are not eligible for protection.

The Archive recommends that child maltreatment researchers consider obtaining Certificates of Confidentiality at the outset of their studies. Obtaining a certificate will ensure permanent protection of sensitive data, whether in the principal investigator's custody, in the Archive or in the possession of secondary users. University research review committees can be helpful in advising investigators as to whether a Certificate is recommended. It is im-

portant that the Archive be notified of studies that are protected by a Certificate of Confidentiality so that future investigators may be notified as to the extent of the protections. For information on applying for a Certificate of Confidentiality, contact Olga Boikess of the Department of Health and Human Services National Institute of Mental Health (Phone: 301-443-3877, E-mail: oboikess@ngmsmtp.nimh.nih.gov).

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## NDACAN Archives Data from Child Welfare Information Systems, Seeks Input from Interested Researchers

By Patrick T. Collins

Recent advances in information technology have enabled human service agencies to establish large scale administrative data systems to manage client data. At the federal level these child welfare information systems have proliferated. While in the past these information systems have focused mainly on aggregate data collection, states are now being required to submit case level data. Compliance is often required to ensure receipt of federal funds.

Designed primarily for administrative and reporting purposes, these systems generate annual datasets with hundreds of thousands of records that have significant potential for scholarly research and secondary analysis. Because the states submit case level data in uniform record formats, the data from different states can be easily be compiled into a single dataset.

This article describes three child welfare information systems that have been developed and funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families (USDHHS/ACF): The Na-

tional Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS), the Adoption and Foster Care Reporting System (AFCARS), and the Runaway and Homeless Youth Management Information System (RHY MIS). *The Archive will be acquiring each of these datasets in the near future. What follows is the dataset descriptions. If you have an interest in conducting secondary analysis with any of these datasets please contact Patrick Collins at the Archive. As a potential data user, we seek your input to help us decide which data from these systems should be archived and how these data should be disseminated. Your comments will help us prioritize and focus our efforts.*

The National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) is a voluntary national data collection and analysis system that was developed through a federal-state partnership. Since the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act was passed in 1974, all 50 states have been required to maintain records of reported and suspected maltreatment. Although this federal legislation requires states to identify and respond to maltreatment, it does

not require states to report these data to the federal government. The goal of NCANDS is to compile these data from the states through voluntary agreements. NCANDS has been collecting aggregate data from the states since 1990. Reports based on the aggregate data have been published for the years 1990 to 1995 and are available from the NCCAN Clearinghouse.\*

NCANDS began collecting data on individual maltreatment reports in 1993 with 11 states participating. This Detailed Case Data Component (DCDC) requires that each state submit case level data in a uniform record format for every report received by CPS. Data records for substantiated reports contain information on report characteristics, child demographics, maltreatment characteristics, child disabilities or other problems, family characteristics, services, and perpetrator characteristics. The DCDC record format allows for up to three perpetrators to be coded for each report. Unsubstantiated data records contain only report char-

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## School-Age and Adolescent Children's Perceptions of Family Functioning in Neglectful and Non-Neglectful Families

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functioning falls below acceptable community standards, will they be protected from enacting neglectful parenting in the future?

With these ideas in mind, this study compared children's perceptions of family functioning in neglectful and non-neglectful homes and further compared these ratings to caseworker reports of the same families to assess rater correspondence across the different family types. These initial comparisons will provide a first look at children's perceptions of family functioning in neglectful homes as they compare to the 'expert' ratings of community professionals.

Before describing the study, it is important to note that the children who participated were part of a larger project that examined family structure and functioning in neglectful families (Gaudin, Polansky, Kilpatrick, & Shilton, 1996). Past studies of these families have indicated that when compared to matched, low income non-neglectful families, the neglectful families scored significantly more poorly on a number of indicators of family well-being (e.g., the adequacy of the physical environment, the expression of positive and negative emotions between family members, the extent of family organization/chaos; Gaudin et al., 1996).

Thus, because the sub-group of children for the present study was taken from the larger sample, it was necessary to first test for the earlier reported differences in family functioning. If these results replicated earlier findings, testing for inter-rater consistency in child and caseworker reports of family functioning would be a logical next step. It was expected that the earlier differences would be maintained in the subsample and would provide a distinctive backdrop against which to test inter-rater consistency in reports of family functioning.

### Methods

The total study compared family structure and functioning in 103 neglectful and 102 non-neglectful low income families (Gaudin, et al., 1996). The current study included the eldest child in each family who was over the age of 12 ( $n = 67$  children; 33 from

neglectful families and 34 from non-neglectful families).

The participants from neglectful families (15 boys and 18 girls; 7 African-American and 26 Caucasian) averaged 13.7 years of age. Comparison children from non-neglectful homes (12 boys and 22 girls; 11 African-American and 23 Caucasian) averaged 13.6 years. Both groups had an average of seven years of education. With the exception of five, all children from neglectful homes had been the subject of a Child and Family Services (CFS) child neglect report; seven children were also targeted in reports of child physical abuse. Extensive documentation for the original study recruitment procedures and research protocols is available from the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN study number: 066).

As stated earlier, the first step was to determine if the subsample of neglectful and non-neglectful families was significantly different on critical aspects of family functioning. Mean comparisons were conducted on measures of family demographics and family stress; the socio-emotional and physical environment provided by the primary caregiver; and characteristics and interviewer impressions of family interaction.

**Family demographics and stress.** Caseworkers known to the families used their records to answer questions about the primary caregiver's age and education; the family income; the number of adults and children in the home; and, the frequency of resource problems (e.g., inadequate housing, unemployment, social isolation) and stressful life events (e.g., death in the family, loss of a job, divorce or separation).

**The socio-emotional and physical environment provided by the primary caregiver.** Caseworkers acquainted with the families completed two measures, the Child Well-Being Scales (subscales: household adequacy, parental disposition, child performance, physical care, psychological care) and the Maternal Characteristics Scale (subscales: maternal relatedness, impulse control, confidence, and verbal accessibility) to assess the overall quality of the socio-emotional and physical environment provided by the primary caregiver.

**Characteristics and interviewer impressions of family interaction.** Each

family was visited at home by an unfamiliar research assistant and was videotaped during three, 5-minute structured interaction tasks. The interactions were coded by graduate students; the results from two coding systems will be reported. First, the Georgia Family Q-Sort, which yielded scores representing eight characteristics of family functioning: positive affect, reserved, tense, negative affect, organized, chaotic, negotiation, and verbal. And second, the Beavers Interactional Scales, which provided two global ratings, family competence and family style. Additional details about the interaction tasks and coder training and reliability can be found in Gaudin et al. (1996).

Also included were four, 5-point ratings made by the interviewers to assess family communication, problem solving and negotiation, expression of warmth and caring, and level of family independence.

### Results from comparing neglectful and non-neglectful families

In general, the subsample of families selected for this study were as different, or alike, as that of the neglectful and non-neglectful families who participated in the original study.

The primary caregivers in the neglectful families had significantly less education and more children living in the home than their non-neglectful counterparts. Primary caregiver age, the number of adults living in the household, and family income were the same in the two groups.

The neglectful families experienced significantly more resource problems and stressful life events within the last year than the non-neglectful families. The frequency of stressful life events within the past 5 years was the same for both groups.

With the exception of one scale, "child performance" from the Child Well-Being Scales, the children in neglectful families experienced a significantly less adaptive socio-emotional and physical environment than the children in non-neglectful homes. Additionally, maternal contentment on all scales was significantly lower in the neglectful homes than in the non-neglectful homes.

Comparison of family interaction as measured by the Georgia Q-Sort and

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the Beavers ratings produced fewer differences (3 of a possible 10) than have been previously reported (Gaudin et al., 1996). The neglectful families were rated as less organized, more chaotic, and less competent than the non-neglectful families. The ratings made by the uninformed interviewers revealed the neglectful families to exhibit poorer communication, negotiation and problem-solving skills, and less warmth and caring than the non-neglectful families.

**Summary.** The results thus far indicated that the children from neglectful and non-neglectful families lived in significantly different family environments. When compared to the non-neglectful families, the neglectful families were larger, headed by a less educated and less content primary caregiver, riddled with more life stress and resource problems, and provided environments that were more chaotic and less emotionally and instrumentally conducive to children's development.

Thus, examining inter-reporter consistency in measures of family functioning was permitted; discernible differences existed between the neglectful and non-neglectful families. The next analysis was intended to confirm

whether children and caseworkers similarly perceived these differences in family functioning.

**Perceptions of family functioning.** Caseworkers and the oldest child in each family over age 12 completed the Beavers Self-Report of Family Functioning. This questionnaire provided the measure of family functioning and yielded five subscales: family health, conflict, cohesion, leadership, and expressiveness and two, 1-item ratings of family functioning and family independence. These scales and ratings were utilized to reflect the characteristics that discriminated the neglectful from the non-neglectful families (e.g., ratings of family chaos, competence, warmth and caring).

### Results from comparing child and caseworker perceptions of family functioning in neglectful and non-neglectful families.

As can be seen from the mean scores in Table 1 below, the comparisons uncovered a number of meaningful findings. To begin, the children's ratings of family functioning did not distinguish the neglectful from the non-neglectful families; the caseworker ratings, however, did significantly discriminate the quality of functioning in the neglectful and non-neglectful households.

Further, although the child and caseworker ratings of family functioning in the non-neglectful homes were the same, the child and caseworker ratings of family functioning in neglectful families were significantly different. Children from neglectful homes portrayed their families more positively than caseworkers. This finding is noteworthy because these children's ratings were virtually the same as the child and caseworker ratings of family functioning in the non-neglectful families.

### Conclusions and Implications

This preliminary study addressed the question, how does the experience of a neglectful household contribute to children's perceptions of their own family's functioning? Toward that end, an inter-rater consistency approach was used to compare children's ratings of family functioning in neglectful and non-neglectful families to caseworker ratings of the same families. The results suggest that the children from neglectful homes may be normalizing their family life experiences to reflect the standards evidenced in the child and caseworker ratings of non-neglectful families. The children from neglectful families painted an optimistic picture of their family life that was not

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**Table 1: Child and Caseworker Reports of Family Functioning: Mean Scores for Neglectful (n=33) and Non-Neglectful (n=34) Families**

	Child		Caseworker		Reporter	Family	Reporter x Family
	Neglect	Control	Neglect	Control	F (1,65)	F (1,65)	F (1,65)
<b>Subscales</b>							
Family Health	2.11	2.05	3.14	2.19	43.66***	16.41***	25.23***
Family Conflict	2.35	2.13	2.95	1.98	5.56*	21.16***	14.93***
Family Cohesion	2.47	2.58	3.08	2.59	7.26*	n.s.	6.52*
Directive Leadership	2.10	2.05	2.95	1.86	4.86*	13.19***	11.88**
Expressiveness	2.02	1.94	3.01	1.96	18.92***	15.59***	17.62***
<b>Global Ratings</b>							
Family Functioning	2.09	1.73	3.06	2.00	16.38***	17.45***	5.15*
Family Independence	2.72	2.82	3.21	2.97	3.82*	n.s.	n.s.

**Note:** Lower scores indicate healthier functioning.

n.s. = not significant

\* p < .05

\*\* p < .01

\*\*\* p < .001

## Guidelines for NDACAN Data Users

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ses. This may involve recoding, aggregating, or otherwise manipulating variables in order to prepare the dataset for particular analytic techniques. After running a series of statistical tests you may need to revise your hypotheses and modify your analysis plan. The process of analyzing, recoding, and revising is iterative and continues until the user is satisfied that their analyses are complete.

When writing up results for publications and presentations it is important to remember to acknowledge both the principal investigator and funder of the original study as well as the Archive. (The suggested wording for the acknowledgment can be found in the user's guide for the study or on the NDACAN Terms of Use Agreement). Additionally, users are required to furnish the Archive with copies of all publications based in whole or part on NDACAN data. We also request notification of presentations of research findings at professional meetings and conferences.

Users frequently ask us when it is appropriate to contact the principal investigator (PI) of a study. The Archive's policy is that users must first contact the Archive prior to contacting the PI.

The Archive will then give the user direction as to whether or not it is appropriate to contact the investigator. This policy allows us to honor the requests of data contributors who have requested not to be contacted for any reason and to determine whether a question or issue is best handled by the Archive staff or the investigator.

Generally speaking, the Archive will resolve all questions related to the dataset and documentation. If you have technical problems with a dataset, find that the dataset does not match the documentation, or your results do not match those previously published, contact the Archive for assistance. NDACAN's goal is to handle all technical problems and data-related questions and to limit user contact with PIs to substantive research questions. This policy reduces the burden on data contributors and results in faster response time on technical problems.

In some instances the Archive will recommend that the user contact the principal investigator of an archived dataset. For example, if the user is developing an analysis plan it may be helpful for them to communicate with the PI before conducting the analysis. The PI may have already done a similar analysis or may be planning to conduct a similar study in the future. In

the past, this type of communication has led to productive collaborative relationships between investigators and users. As always, be sure to contact the Archive prior to contacting the investigator.

Contacting the PI of an NDACAN dataset is optional during the early stages of a secondary analysis project and, as discussed earlier, data contributors have very different preferences regarding contact with secondary users. However, once you have a manuscript that is ready for submission we request that you send a draft copy to the principal investigator. This is a professional courtesy that gives the investigator a chance to respond to the manuscript prior to publication. It can also benefit the secondary user because the principal investigator is likely to anticipate the comments of reviewers.

In summary, the secondary analysis process, like primary data collection and analysis, involves several sequential steps. In addition, users of NDACAN datasets have unique responsibilities to the Archive and the principal investigators of the datasets with which they work. For further clarification of these responsibilities, consult the NDACAN Terms of Use Agreement or contact Patrick Collins at the Archive.

## School-Age and Adolescent Children's Perceptions of Family Functioning in Neglectful and Non-Neglectful Families

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supported by the reports and observations of others.

One implication of this study concerns designing effective interventions for children who grow up in neglectful families. Although we know that neglected children and adolescents are at risk for behavioral and academic problems (Crouch & Milner, 1993), we know little about how neglect affects what children think about family life. If children from neglectful homes perceive their family's functioning as the same as a non-neglectful family, they may, as adults, repeat the parenting and family behavior they experienced as children and believe that they are meeting community standards of adequate parenting. One potential mechanism for implementing intervention programs is through secondary school family science curriculum. By learn-

ing about family systems, child development, and parent-child relations, children from neglectful families may have the opportunity to revise and improve their perceptions of family functioning.

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# New Datasets Available from NDACAN

## **Victimization and Other Risk Factors for Child Maltreatment Among School-Age Parents: A Longitudinal Study, 1988-1992**

**Boyer, D., & Fine, D.**

**NDACAN Study Number: 067**

This was a descriptive longitudinal field study of risk factors in the etiology of child abuse and neglect among adolescent parents. The investigators examined sexual victimization prior to pregnancy as a major antecedent factor for child maltreatment. Pregnant and/or parenting adolescents were recruited from ongoing educational and social programs in the state of Washington in 1990. The sample consisted of 535 adolescent females who were 17 years old or younger at the time of their first pregnancy, and 21 years old or younger at the time they completed the survey. Follow-up data for this study were collected on 318 of these females in 1992. The survey data describe respondents' demographic characteristics, family background, pregnancies, parenting history, detailed sexual histories and behavioral indicators of sexual victimization, physical maltreatment, and neglect. In addition, data were collected on parenting skills and attitudes, social support, sex roles and attitudes toward sexual activity. The data allow for examination of the inter-relationship between: 1) sexual abuse, 2) adolescent pregnancy, and 3) child maltreatment by adolescent parents.

## **Child Maltreatment Recurrences Among Families Served by Child Protective Services, 1984 to 1992**

**Zuravin, S. J. & DePanfilis, D.**

**NDACAN Study Number: 069**

This follow-up study provides information on the recurrences of child maltreatment in 237 families originally surveyed in a 1984 study entitled, Fertility and Contraception Among Low-Income Child Abusing Mothers in Baltimore, MD, 1984-1992. Data were obtained from the Baltimore City, Maryland Department of Social Services (BCDSS) for the period 1984 to 1992. This study examined families that experienced a new substantiated report of child maltreatment while they were being served by protective services as well as families that had a substantiated report after the case was closed.

Data on the type and length of social services (including foster care) and financial services these families received from DSS were also collected.

The follow-up data include four machine-readable data files which contain 237 cases and a total of 619 variables. Information is provided on the dates and types of CPS services, the dates and types of social and financial services, the dates of foster care placement, and information about the type and severity of maltreatment that occurred during the original study period.

## **Third National Study of the Incidence of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS-3), 1995**

**Sedlak, A.**

**NDACAN Study Number: 070**

The Third National Incidence Study (NIS-3) is a congressionally mandated effort of the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN) and Westat, Inc. NIS-3 was conducted between 1993 and 1995, and published in 1996. NIS-3 is the single most comprehensive source of information about the current incidence of child abuse and neglect in the United States.

The NIS-3 findings are based on a nationally representative sample of over 5,600 CPS and non-CPS professionals in 842 agencies serving 42 counties. The study used two sets of standardized definitions of abuse and neglect. Under the Harm Standard, children identified to the study were considered to be maltreated only if they had already experienced harm from abuse or neglect. Under the Endangerment Standard, children who experienced abuse or neglect that put them at risk of harm were included in the set of those considered to be maltreated, together with the already-harmed children.

NIS-3 had several objectives: (1) To provide current estimates of the incidence of child abuse and neglect in the US and measure changes in these estimates from earlier studies; (2) To examine the distribution of child maltreatment in relation to various demographic factors; (3) To estimate the incidence of substantiated maltreatment cases that result in civil and criminal proceedings and their disposition; (4) To develop an understanding of the relationship between an incident of

maltreatment, its observation, its report to a child protective service agency, and any actions taken by the agency.

The dataset includes three files. The Main NIS-3 Public Use File includes the analysis data from the Basic NIS Sentinel Study. The CPS-Only NIS-3 Public Use File includes data collected on all children who were listed in CPS investigations. The third component of the dataset comprises electronic versions of the final report appendices in Excel spreadsheet form.

## **National Study of Protective, Preventive, and Reunification Services Delivered to Children and Their Families, 1994**

**Maza, P.**

**NDACAN Study Number: 071**

The passage of the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-272) significantly reoriented child welfare services from a system which focused on foster care placement to one which was intended to provide the services necessary to maintain children in their own homes. In response to the provisions of the law, it was expected that a number of State and county initiatives in such areas as family preservation and coordination of services across agencies would be developed. The extent to which these initiatives have actually been implemented is unknown.

The purpose of the National Study of Protective, Preventive, and Reunification Services Delivered to Children and Their Families, 1994, was to provide a reliable picture of the children and families in the "new" child welfare system. The study was designed not only to describe the current delivery system in terms of the number and characteristics of the children and families served by service type, but also to examine the agency, service, and client characteristics that are related to case status. The data will be used to inform future policy decisions in child welfare.

The dataset consists of three files. The main case file includes 2109 observations and 1205 variables. Two additional files include a combined 11,335 observations and 25 variables. Information is provided on the number, types and services provided to children

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# Ordering Data and Documentation from the Archive

## Documentation is Available from the Internet

Documentation for most Archive studies is available gratis from our Web Server. To download or browse documentation, go to our web site at <http://www.ndacan.cornell.edu/>. Scroll down to the "Datasets" bullet and click on "Current Holdings". The "Current Holdings" page will allow you to view study descriptions and to browse dataset documentation in HTML or to download files in portable document format (PDF). The PDF files may be printed with Adobe Acrobat Reader which is available free at the Adobe Web site (this link is provided).

## Data and Documentation Orders

Data and documentation for all Archive studies are available upon request. Researchers must mail a signed a Terms of Use Agreement, a completed Order Form and payment to the Archive. The price for data and documentation is \$75, whereas documentation-only orders are \$25.

Order forms and Terms of Use Agreements are available from our web server or directly from the Archive. To obtain forms from the Internet go to the "Ordering Information" section. You will need to print out the HTML version of the Order Form and the Terms of Use Agreement which is in PDF for-

mat. Order forms and Terms of Use Agreements may also be obtained via U.S. mail by contacting the Archive by E-mail ([DataCAN@cornell.edu](mailto:DataCAN@cornell.edu)) or phone (607) 255-7799. All orders must be sent with payment via U.S. mail (faxed orders are not accepted) to the following address:

Attention: Data Orders  
National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect  
Cornell University  
Family Life Development Center  
MVR Hall  
Ithaca, NY, 14853-4401

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## New Datasets Available from NDACAN

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and their families, with emphasis of differences in annual and point in time data, case duration, in-home and out-of-home services, race and kinship care.

### National Youth Victimization Prevention Survey 1992-1994

Finkelhor, D.

NDACAN Study Number: 072

One of the primary goals of the National Youth Victimization Prevention Study was to derive estimates of various forms of victimization among youths. The other primary goal was to obtain children's assessments of the victimization prevention programs which many schools have begun offering over the past decade.

Telephone interviews were conducted with 2000 children between the ages of 10 and 16 and their caretakers. Children were interviewed at two time points. The initial survey was conducted in 1992 and the follow-up was conducted 15 months later. In addition to collecting basic demographic information, the survey asked children to recall details of victimizations personally experienced, respond to a test of knowledge about sexual victimization, recall the content of prevention programs to which they were exposed, render judgments regarding the usefulness of these programs, report on behavioral, social and psychological troubles (including offense behavior and substance abuse), and express opinions on

a range of topics including the level of crime in their schools and in their neighborhoods, and reaction to the survey itself.

The dataset consists of two machine-readable data files. The wave one data file contains 2000 cases and 970 variables. The wave two data file contains 1457 observations and 1066 variables. There are eight additional data files that include information about specific types of victimization incidents (e.g. sexual, non-family or most recent incident). These data files are not distributed, however the files and the programs which were used to create them from the main study files are available upon request.

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## Results of the Child-Maltreatment-Research-L Survey

*continued from page 4*

### Suggestions for Improvement

While response to the survey was overwhelmingly positive, we realize that there is room for improvement. When asked how CMRL could be improved, survey respondents provided many suggestions worthy of consideration. Some of the most frequently cited areas for improvement are listed below:

1. Categorize and label postings to facilitate sorting/filtering.
2. Post addresses and information about other pertinent lists.
3. Increase list activity.

4. Post a monthly table of contents of research articles on CAN.
5. Post and discuss more research findings/reviews.
6. Include more information about training, employment, conferences, and funding.

The Archive is currently considering these and other suggestions for improvement.

### Conclusion

Overall the results of the 1996 CMRL survey were very encouraging. During its first three years of operation the CMRL was successful in attracting a large subscriber base of active researchers with considerable experience in the

field of child maltreatment. CMRL subscribers experienced numerous benefits from list subscription including the identification of new contacts and colleagues, enhanced professional exchange and identification of resources to enhance their work. We conclude that the resources dedicated to maintaining CMRL are well worth the investment. Thus we will continue to maintain and improve the list as well as identify new ways in which the Archive can facilitate professional exchange among researchers in this field.

*Patrick T. Collins is the Project Director of the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect at Cornell University.*

## Recent Publications by Data Users

By Patrick T. Collins

The Archive's primary mission is to increase the amount of scholarly work conducted with existing data resources. Maintaining an accurate account of the substantive works completed using NDACAN datasets is essential to demonstrating the Archive's success in accomplishing this mission. Data users are asked to provide the Archive with copies of theses, unpublished manuscripts, and publications based on data from the Archive. Notification of professional presentations is also requested. The following is a sampling of recent scholarly work completed with NDACAN data.

Coohey, C. (In press) Home-alone and other inadequately supervised children. *Child Welfare*.

Eckenrode, J., Rowe, E., Laird, M., & Bratwithe, J. (1995), Mobility as a mediator of the effects of child maltreatment on academic performance. *Child Development*, 66, 1130-114.

Gable, S. (1997, April). *School-age and adolescent children's perceptions of family functioning in neglectful and non-neglectful families*. Paper presented at the Society for Research in Child Development Conference, Washington, DC.

Kendall-Tackett, K., & Eckenrode, J. (1996). The effects of neglect on academic achievement and disciplinary problems: A developmental perspective. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 20, 161-169.

Rubio, D.M. (1996). *Factors related to family court involvement in reported cases of child sexual abuse*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Washington University, Saint Louis.

Wolcott, D. J. (1997). *Children with disabilities: Risk factors for maltreatment*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Denver.

### NDACAN Archives Data From Child Welfare Information Systems, Seeks Input From Interested Researchers

*continued from page 5*

acteristics and child demographics. A report based on the NCANDS 1993 DCDC data is available from the NCCAN Clearinghouse\*.

The Archive plans to acquire the 1995 NCANDS DCDC data set from the contractor, Walter R. McDonald and Associates, Inc. in the Fall of 1997. We hope to distribute the data set to researchers in Spring 1998 and to make it the focus of the 1998 Summer Research Institute. The data set will represent the largest data base of child maltreatment reports ever compiled and will present new opportunities for secondary analysis. For example, researchers will be able to study geographic patterns in reporting and substantiation using a universe of cases for the geographic regions covered. In addition, relationships between child and perpetrator characteristics and type of maltreatment can also be examined. *The Archive is particularly interested in identifying potential users of this dataset prior to dissemination.*

The Adoption and Foster Care Reporting System (AFCARS) is a project of the Children's Bureau, a department within the USDHHS/ACF. It is a mandatory system which requires states to collect and report information on children who are in foster care or who experience a public adoption. This reporting system was established to address policy development and program management issues at the state and federal levels. It provides the federal gov-

ernment with the information needed to direct and manage the foster care and adoption assistance programs. Additionally, it allows the Bureau to respond to requests for information from the Congress, the General Accounting Office, and the Office of Management and Budget. The AFCARS data will be used by these bodies to develop and implement policy.

AFCARS data collection was begun in 1995 with participation from over 40 states. The system is replacing the Voluntary Cooperative Information System which had collected aggregate data annually since 1982. Beginning in FY 1998 states will be penalized for not participating in AFCARS. Thus, all states are expected to participate by that time. Case level data are submitted to the Children's Bureau twice annually and the Bureau creates two annualized files for each fiscal year. One file contains data on children in foster care and the other includes data on children who were publicly adopted. The Archive is in the process of archiving the 1995 foster care and adoption files. The 1995 foster care file contains data on 280,000 children from 14 states. The adoption file contains data on approximately 14,000 adoptions. These files should be available to secondary users late in 1997. Plans are also underway to archive the 1996 and future AFCARS datasets.

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Management Information System (RHY MIS) was developed by the Fam-

ily and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) of the Administration for Children and Families. The RHY MIS is unique in that it can be used at both the federal and local level. Grantees of FYSB's Basic Center Program, Transitional Living Program, and Drug Abuse Prevention Program use the system to maintain extensive information on youth served and services provided. They also use the system to export data records and submit them to FYSB on a quarterly basis. FYSB amasses the data from the grantees in a large centralized database. A forthcoming report from FYSB will describe the first three years of RHY MIS data collection (1992-1995). This document should be available from the NCCAN Clearinghouse\* in late 1997.

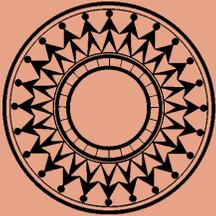
The Archive is in the process of archiving RHY MIS data for fiscal year 1996. This dataset will contain information on approximately 100,000 children. A wide range of data are available including geocodes, child and family demographics, information on drug abuse and other youth problems, and data on child maltreatment. This data set should be available for dissemination late in 1997.

\* National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information, P.O. Box 1182, Washington, DC 20013-1182, Phone: 1-800-394-3366  
E-mail: nccanch@calib.com  
WWW: <http://www.calib.com/nccanch/>

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Phone: 607-255-7799  
Fax: 607-255-8562  
E-mail: [DataCAN@cornell.edu](mailto:DataCAN@cornell.edu)  
WWW: <http://www.ndacan.cornell.edu/>

**The 1998 Summer Research Institute is scheduled for June 14-19, 1998.  
Applications will be available in early December.**



*The mission of the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN) is to facilitate the secondary analysis of research data relevant to the study of child abuse and neglect. By making data available to a larger number of researchers, NDACAN seeks to provide a relatively inexpensive and scientifically productive means for researchers to explore important issues in the child maltreatment field.*

## **Other Resources for Child Abuse and Neglect Researchers**

### **CANDIS: The Child Abuse and Neglect Database Instrument System**

The CANDIS database is a searchable database containing information on numerous standardized assessment instruments that have been used in child abuse and neglect research. CANDIS allows users to view instrument data, browse instruments, query instrument files, backup files, and reindex files. The CANDIS database can be downloaded from the following Web site: <http://www.musc.edu/cvc/>.

### **The National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information**

The Clearinghouse is a service of the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect and serves as a national resource for professionals seeking information on the prevention, identification, and treatment of child abuse and neglect. The Clearinghouse can be contacted as follows:  
National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information, P.O. Box 1182, Washington, DC 20013

Phone: 1-800-FYI-3366  
E-Mail: [nccanch@calib.com](mailto:nccanch@calib.com)  
WWW: <http://www.calib.com/nccanch/>

### **Twelfth Annual San Diego Conference on Responding to Child Maltreatment**

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### **Addresses for NDACAN Internet Resources**

**NDACAN Internet Mailbox:** [DataCAN@cornell.edu](mailto:DataCAN@cornell.edu)  
**Child Maltreatment Listserv:** [Child-Maltreatment-Research-L@cornell.edu](mailto:Child-Maltreatment-Research-L@cornell.edu)  
**Subscription Address for Listserv:** [listserv@cornell.edu](mailto:listserv@cornell.edu)  
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**Anonymous FTP:** [gopher.ndacan.cornell.edu](http://gopher.ndacan.cornell.edu) (128.253.37.138)