

THE NDACAN

UPDATE

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

NCANDS Detailed Case Data Component Files Now Available

By Jeff Johnson and John Gaudiosi

Each year the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) under the sponsorship of the Children's Bureau in the Administration of Children, Youth and Families of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services produces two data sets available for use by the research community. The Summary Data Component (SDC) provides annual aggregate counts from all States on items such as the number of children who were the subject of a maltreatment report, the number of child victims, and the age and race of victims. These data are available through the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information. The Detailed Case Data Component (DCDC), now available through the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN), provides case-level data for each child who was the subject of a report. While fewer states have submitted case-level data for the DCDC, the data are much richer in terms of the respective analyses which can be performed. The following overview of the DCDC provides a general summary of its data structure and variables.

Each data record represents a child who was the subject of an investigated report of alleged child maltreatment. A separate record is created for each child associated with a specific report. For example, a report with three children will be organized into three "report-child" records. Moreover, if a child is the subject of more than one report during the reporting period, the child will appear in more than one record. A unique ID is used for each child and each report. The same child, associated

with multiple reports can be identified through the use of this encrypted child ID. Consequently, when using the DCDC data extracts, it is possible to analyze an unduplicated count of children by creating or selecting a single data record for each unique child. Similarly, using the report ID, data can be compiled for each unique report.

To assist the researcher, two special data extract files have been created for archiving at the NDACAN. These analytical extracts were created for a number of reasons including the anticipated need of separating children who were the subject of a report (Extract J) from children who were identified as maltreatment victims (Extract K). An additional reason for creating the separate extracts is that some of the data elements are reported only for maltreatment victims. Hence, Extract J contains data only on the characteristics of the report and the child, while Extract K adds data on the type of maltreatment, risk factors, and post-investigation services provided. Documentation regarding the specific contents of each of these extracts is available through NDACAN.

In general, the data provided in the DCDC extracts can be summarized

under the following six headings. As noted, however, some of these fields are not available for children who were associated with an unsubstantiated report and are not included in Extract J. A discussion of the types of analyses made possible for each of these groups of variables is also provided.

- Encrypted Report and Child ID's
- Characteristics of the Report
- Characteristics of the Child
- Type of Maltreatment(s) Reported
- Risk Factors Identified
- Post-Investigative Services Provided

As noted, the report and child ID's provided in the DCDC are used to identify children who were in the same report and to identify children who appeared in more than one report. The child ID is the most commonly used because it allows the researcher to identify children who were victims of a recurrent maltreatment event. Hence, one very important research topic that can be addressed using data from the DCDC is one that identifies the characteristics of children that have been revictimized.

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Call for Datasets

The Archive is continually looking for datasets which would be valuable additions to its holdings. Criteria for selection is based on the dataset's methodological rigor, scope, relevance and technical quality. If you have data or know of data which would be particularly beneficial to other child maltreatment researchers, please contact us.

Archive News

Staff Changes

In October, 1998, Anne Heberger joined the Archive Staff as the new Acquisitions Manager. Anne received her M.S.W. from the University of Pennsylvania in May, 1998. In January of 1999, long time Data Manager, Sarah Simpkins, left the Archive to pursue other professional opportunities at Cornell University. In June of 1999, Elliott Smith joined the Archive as the new Project Manager. Elliott received his doctorate in Developmental Psychology from Cornell University in August, 1998.

The *NDACAN Updata* is published annually by the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN), a project of the Family Life Development Center at Cornell University's College of Human Ecology. Funding for NDACAN is provided by grant 90-CA-1567 from the Office of Child Abuse and Neglect, United States Department of Health and Human Services. The Archive's primary mission is to promote the secondary analysis of existing research data on child maltreatment. The NDACAN staff are:

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NDACAN Investigator's Handbook Updated

The Archive has released an updated version of *Depositing Data with the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect: A Handbook for Investigators*. This manual was developed for Children's Bureau research grantees who are required to archive their data with NDACAN. It is equally valuable to voluntary contributors. The handbook advises investigators about the nature, content and format of the data and documentation to be deposited in the Archive. It also provides answers to the most frequently asked questions about archiving. A free copy can be obtained by contacting the Archive or visiting our web site.

NDACAN Web Site Expanded

The NDACAN web site (www.ndacan.cornell.edu) has been significantly expanded to include dataset documentation and variable frequencies. For most of our datasets complete documentation and frequencies can now be viewed on-line or downloaded for printing. Having this detailed information readily available enables researchers to determine more easily which datasets will be useful to them.

CMR-L Listserv Update and Information

In 1993 the Archive established an Internet discussion group (also known as a listserv, list, or E-conference) to facilitate information exchange and networking among researchers in the field of child abuse and neglect. The Child Maltreatment Research discussion group is an important scholarly listserv in the field of child welfare research and now reaches over 950 subscribers.

The list is carefully moderated to ensure relevant discussions and a manageable volume of postings. The scope of the discussion group includes all areas of child maltreatment research (e.g., epidemiology, etiology, prevention, consequences, intervention, and treatment) and the full range of research issues (e.g., measurement, instrumentation, statistical analysis, ethics). We particularly want to encourage information exchange about secondary data analysis and the use of administrative data. The list is not open to discussions of program or clinical issues except as

they relate to research. There is no fee for joining or using the Child Maltreatment Research list. To join, send an E-mail message from the address that will receive the postings to listproc@cornell.edu containing only the following line:

subscribe Child-Maltreatment-Research-L Fname Lname

Fname and Lname should be replaced with your first and last names. To unsubscribe from the list, send an E-mail message from the address to be removed to listproc@cornell.edu containing only the following line:

unsubscribe Child-Maltreatment-Research-L

All postings to the CMR-L mailing list since its inception are now available for viewing on our website. They can be found through the link called "Child-Maltreatment-Research-L Index of Postings" at www.ndacan.cornell.edu. Our second survey of CMR-L subscribers will be conducted this fall. The NDACAN staff will analyze and compare the new results with those from our first survey completed in 1996.

Position Opening

The Cornell University Family Life Development Center anticipates a post-doctoral associate position within the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect. This person will work in collaboration with the Archive's project director and staff in conducting research studies that utilize the data sets currently being distributed by the Archive. Candidates must have completed a doctorate in the social sciences, social work, public health, or a related discipline prior to the beginning of the appointment. Prior experience with child maltreatment or family violence research and secondary analysis is desirable. Strong quantitative and computing skills are required. Appointment is for one year, beginning about August 1, 2000, with a possibility of renewal, and a starting salary of \$32,000 per year plus benefits. Review of applications will begin January 15 and continue until the position is filled. Send a statement of research and professional interests, along with a curriculum vitae and reprints, to:

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NCANDS Detailed Case Data Component Files Now Available

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Characteristics of the report included in each DCDC data record include items such as the report date, the report disposition date, report disposition, and report source. These characteristics can be combined with other data fields to generate a variety of reports such as recurrence rates within a 90 day time frame. At the same time, they can also be used simply to analyze characteristics of the reporting process. For example, an analysis of the relative decline in maltreatment reports from educational sources during the summer months might also examine whether on not other agencies increase their rate of reporting.

The child's age, sex, race, and Hispanic ethnicity are also included in the DCDC record for each child who was the subject of a report. From this set of variables, it is possible to study the characteristics of children who have been found to be victims compared to children for whom the report was not substantiated or indicated.

The DCDC data record allows a total of four different types of maltreatment to be reported for each child victim. Coded categories include neglect, medical neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, or psychological/emotional maltreatment. Categories of 'other' or 'unknown' are also sometimes recorded. In most cases, only one type of maltreatment is reported for a given child, but combinations of different types of maltreatment are fairly common. Using these data, it is possible to examine the differences among victims of different types of maltreatment. For example, the age and sex of victims of neglect compared to victims of physical abuse can be examined. Reported combinations of maltreatment types can also be analyzed with respect to the characteristics of the child or the report.

DCDC data on items such as substance abuse by the child's caretaker, the child's medical condition, or the family's financial problems are recorded into a set of data fields commonly referred to as risk factors. From this set of fields, in combination with those summarized above, it is possible to answer such questions as whether or not reported caretaker substance abuse is more common in cases of physical abuse when compared to neglect. Similarly, analysis of the DCDC data might examine whether sexual

abuse is associated with specific risk factors. However, analyses using this set of variables might be limited due to under-reporting of data for these fields. For example, very few states currently report data on caretaker substance abuse.

Another set of DCDC data fields pertain to services that were provided. Consequently, using the DCDC extracts, it is possible to determine how closely the provision of services is related to the type of maltreatment(s), the child's age, caretaker substance abuse, and even the number of children in the report. While state reporting on services is relatively complete when compared to reporting on risk factors, analyses which incorporate services should begin by identifying states that consistently report service data.

Currently, DCDC data extracts are available from 14 states with nearly half providing data for all three reporting years 1995-1997. The following table provides a list of these states, the years for which data are available, and a count of the number of report/child

pairs reported. As indicated in the table, more than one million records are included in the complete set of extracts. The importance of having such a large number of records, rather than a smaller sample, is that specific groups identified by the researcher will often be adequately represented. For example, in 1997 alone, the DCDC extracts contain reports of more than 25,000 victims of physical abuse whose families were provided post-investigation services. Comparable counts are likely to be found for other groups of children who are of special interest to the field. Additional states are expected to provide data for the 1998 reporting year.

Jeff Johnson is a research associate at Walter R. McDonald and Associates, Inc. and a member of the NCANDS technical team. John Gaudiosi is a social science statistician at the Children's Bureau in Washington, D.C. Mr. Gaudiosi is also the federal project officer for the NCANDS.

NCANDS DCDC Report/Child Records by State and Year

STATE	1995	1996	1997
Colorado	6,073	6,468	7,179
Delaware	5,055	7,353	
Florida	163,297	164,460	168,256
Kentucky	46,566		44,984
Massachusetts	54,497	57,346	61,790
Missouri	78,996		
North Carolina	89,258	71,530	
Oklahoma (fiscal year)		40,666	46,676
Rhode Island			13,208
Texas	157,636		
Utah	26,610	24,684	27,129
Vermont	2,606	2,647	2,671
Washington	58,635	57,922	59,726
Wyoming			726

1999 Summer Research Institute a Success

Each year the Archive sponsors a summer research institute. The institute provides a small group of scholars the opportunity to spend a week in June on the Cornell campus immersed in data and secondary analysis. Away from the constant barrage of ringing phones, confused students, and the recurring mantra that "You've got mail," institute participants are able to devote themselves to answering a set of research questions using data from the Archive. The goal of the institute is to remove hindrances to scientific inquiry by providing significant computer time, knowledgeable consultants, and a group of colleagues with whom to confer and commiserate.

This year, thirteen individuals attended the institute. The group was diverse in geographic location and research interest. Quite a few participants pursued questions of interest in administrative datasets regarding child abuse and neglect, adoption and foster care,

and runaway and homeless youth. Others braved the rigors of unfamiliar statistical packages to investigate issues within the context of complex survey designs. An especially exciting aspect of the institute is that participants come from every career stage, and this year was no different. There were 3 graduate students, 1 postdoc, 6 professors, and 3 researchers from organizations concerned with children and families. The disciplines represented at the institute included psychology, social work, nursing, and education.

Participants attended lectures by Cornell faculty members Jim Garbarino, John Eckenrode, Rosemary Avery, J.S. Butler, and Ed Frongillo. Presentations provided insight into the complexities of secondary analysis and administrative datasets and gave participants the opportunity to learn techniques for dealing with missing data and applying survival analysis models.

During the computing sessions

throughout the week, participants had the opportunity to receive one-on-one consulting with the Archive staff and volunteers from the Cornell Office of Statistical Consulting and the Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research. Jeff Johnson of Walter R. McDonald & Associates, Inc., was a special addition to the consulting team and provided valuable assistance to participants working with the NCANDS data. (See the "New Datasets" section and the cover article of this newsletter for a description of the NCANDS.)

Outside the computer lab, participants explored restaurants and shopping in Collegenetown and downtown Ithaca. One evening a group of participants and Archive staff went on a hike at Robert H. Treman State Park and saw the view of Cayuga Lake from nearby Ithaca College. This year's research institute was everything it was designed to be: intensive, educational, and fun.

New Datasets Available from NDACAN

National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS), 1995-1997 NDACAN Dataset Number 75 **Anticipated Release Date: Oct. '99**

The National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) is a voluntary national data collection and analysis system created in response to the requirements of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. The NCANDS consists of two components. The Summary Data Component (SDC) is a compilation of key aggregate child abuse and neglect statistics from all states, including data on reports, investigations, victims, and perpetrators. The Detailed Case Data Component (DCDC) is a compilation of case-level information from state child protective services agencies on children who were the subject of a report alleging child maltreatment. Information from the SDC data is reported in the Office of Child Abuse and Neglect publication entitled, "Child Maltreatment." We are distributing the public-use data files for the NCANDS SDC as well as the Detailed Case Data Component (DCDC). Eleven states provided DCDC data to the Archive in 1995: Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Missouri, North Carolina, Texas, Utah, Vermont and Washington. In

1996 nine states archived DCDC data. These states were Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Utah, Vermont, and Washington. Ten states provided DCDC data in 1997. These states were Colorado, Florida, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, Washington, and Wyoming.

The 1997 NCANDS Public Use Data Files (PUDF) consist of 60 data files—two from each participating state for each year. One of the two files per state contains 14 variables and includes characteristics of all children included in a report of alleged maltreatment. Characteristics of the report (such as the report source and report disposition) are also included in this file. The second file for each state contains 62 variables but is limited to children who were identified as victims. A child was classified as a victim and included in this file only if a substantiated or indicated maltreatment was reported for the child. In addition to basic information concerning the report and the child, this file of child victims also contains information concerning the type of maltreatment, the support services provided to the family, and special problems that were identified for the child, caretaker,

or family. Neither file contains data on the alleged perpetrators. Reports of child fatalities have also been excluded from both files.

While the data from the participating 1995-1997 NCANDS DCDC states does not constitute a statistically representative sample of maltreated children in the United States, they do show distributions similar to those found in studies using national data. They also provide an important opportunity to answer many questions regarding child maltreatment cases that are known to child protective services.

National Survey of Current and Former Foster Parents, 1993 **Ronna Cook** **NDACAN Dataset Number 79**

The purpose of this study was to collect and analyze data from a nationally representative sample of current and former foster parents that would provide direction for future policy development. A mail/telephone survey was conducted of current and former foster parents in 16 counties in nine states. Based on lists provided by the counties, 1572 current foster parents and 362

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New Datasets Available from NDACAN

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former foster parents received a questionnaire in the mail. Follow up post cards and telephone calls were made. The survey was designed to identify foster parent characteristics, the types of children for whom they provided care, the types of children they would be willing to care for in the future, and their interactions with the child welfare system. An overall response rate of 71% was achieved.

The dataset consists of two files. The first file includes information collected from current foster parents; it contains 1048 observations and 396 variables, including final and replicate weights. The second file includes information collected from former foster parents; it contains 265 observations and 307 variables, including case and estimate weights.

Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS), 1996

NDACAN Dataset Number 80

Anticipated Release Date: Jan. '00

The Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System is an ongoing federally-mandated data collection effort to which states submit data on children in adoption and foster care. This dataset represents the second year

of AFCARS data. AFCARS contains information on child demographics including gender, birth, race, ethnicity, as well as information such as the number of previous stays in foster care, service goals, availability for adoption, duration of care, funding sources and information on the biological and foster parents. The AFCARS reports are required on a semiannual basis, with financial penalties imposed to delinquent states beginning in fiscal year 1998. Generally over 30 states have been reporting at least some portion of the requested foster care data and close to 30 states have been reporting at least some portion of the adoption data.

The purpose for the establishment of AFCARS was twofold. First, AFCARS is designed to address policy development and program management issues at both the state and federal levels. Second, the data will be useful for research aimed at understanding the foster care program and the factors that are contributing to its expansion. Tables summarizing the AFCARS data are available from the Children's Bureau Homepage on the World Wide Web (www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cb/stats/afcars/index.htm).

Sensitively Assessing Children's Testimonial Competence Study, 1997.

**Karen Saywitz and Thomas D. Lyon
NDACAN Dataset Number 81**

Anticipated Release Date: Jan. '00

Most courts require that all witnesses take an oath, or at least "promise" to tell the truth when testifying. To appreciate the oath, a witness must understand the difference between truths and lies, as well as his or her obligation to tell the truth. The courts, therefore, routinely question child witnesses regarding their understanding of truth and lies before allowing them to testify. This research project examines the most sensitive means by which to measure children's competency to take an oath. Researchers conducted six studies using 475 children ages 4 to 7 years old.

Two groups of children were tested: one group (352 children) were maltreated children under the jurisdiction of the Los Angeles County juvenile court, and the other group (123 children) were nonreferred children attending a university preschool. In each study the children were interviewed and tested by an examiner who gave them questions to answer and tasks to perform. The results show at (1) young maltreated child witnesses exhibit serious delays in receptive and productive vocabulary; (2) the children's understanding of the meaning and morality of lying depends on how they are asked to demonstrate their understanding; (3) despite weak vocabularies, most maltreated children understand the meaning and morality of lying by age 5; and (4) young child witnesses may not understand the request "promise to tell the truth".

APA Section on Child Maltreatment

An invitation is extended to join the Section on Child Maltreatment, the only permanent organization within the American Psychological Association focused on enhancing prevention and intervention efforts in the field of child maltreatment. Your membership will help the Section foster research, practice, and advocacy in this important field. Benefits for members include receiving the Section newsletter and the Section Alert (up-to-date information on funding for research and treatment innovations.) To join, mail your name, address, phone number, and e-mail address with a check for \$15 (\$10 students) to: APA Division 37 Section 1, Division Services, 750 First Street NE, Washington DC 20002-4242. Contact Larissa Niec, PhD (Lniec@iname.com) with membership questions.

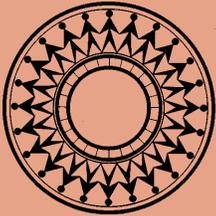
2000 Summer Research Institute

The next NDACAN Summer Research Institute has been scheduled for June 11-16, 2000. Twelve applicants will be selected on a competitive basis and participants generally represent a wide variety of disciplines (e.g., psychology, medicine, epidemiology, law, social work). Applications for the 2000 Summer Research Institute will be available in October '99. To receive the application questions, please visit our web site (www.ndacan.cornell.edu) or E-mail your request to DataCAN@cornell.edu.

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**The 2000 Summer Research Institute is scheduled for June 11-16, 2000.
Applications will be available in early October.**



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

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
Web site: www.calib.com/nccanch

NISC Child Abuse & Neglect Bibliography

In conjunction with the Clearinghouse, the National Information Services Corporation offers a bibliographic database specific to the issue of child maltreatment. Relevant citations and abstracts to books, journal articles, final reports, etc. are available free of

charge. The database can be accessed via CD-ROM or NISC's Biblioline internet site. Instructions for ordering the CD-ROM or accessing the web site can be found at www.nisc.com/Frame/NISC_products-f.htm.

The CWLA National Data Analysis System

The Child Welfare League of America offers access to their National Data Analysis System (NDAS). This system provides access to all states' child abuse and neglect statistics from 1990 to 1996, with some data available for 1997 and 1998. Tables and graphs can be customized by state and data year. The NDAS can be accessed by visiting: <http://ndas.cwla.org>

Addresses for NDACAN Internet Resources

NDACAN Internet Mailbox: DataCAN@cornell.edu
Child Maltreatment Listserv: Child-Maltreatment-Research-L@cornell.edu
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