Youth Self-Report of Child Maltreatment in Representative Surveys

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Limited National Representative Child Maltreatment Data, in Canada

- Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (CIS)
- Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (UCR)
- Canadian Community Health Survey-Mental Health-2012 (CCHS)
- General Social Survey (GSS) Victimisation
Child Maltreatment has Negative Health Consequences

- Child maltreatment is a public health issue that poses unique challenges to quantify and study
  
  - Interferes with youth development
  - Leads to youth morbidity and mortality e.g.
    - Alcohol-related injury
    - Drug use
    - Self harming behaviour
    - Suicide
Child Maltreatment Data Collection

• A growing body of describes child maltreatment:
  – Prevalence
  – Risk factors
  – Social and health impacts

• Population-based data from other countries allows for international comparisons

• The ethical implications of collecting child maltreatment survey research data are crucial

• Appropriate measures need to be taken to avoid emotional distress
Objectives

1. Identify representative surveys that collect data from youth on their exposure to child maltreatment

2. Examine the quality of methods used to measure child maltreatment

3. Assess practices and procedures undertaken to address ethical issues
Methods: Selection Process and Search Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification</th>
<th>Total number of articles identified through database search</th>
<th>Total number of articles identified from other sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4383</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Screened/eligibility</th>
<th>Total number of records after duplicates removed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3885</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Screened/eligibility</th>
<th>Total number of records screened</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3885</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Screened/eligibility</th>
<th>Total number of records screened for eligibility by title and abstract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Included</th>
<th>Total number of articles meeting inclusion criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Included</th>
<th>Total number of surveys used in articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. Search Strategy in each Stage of Review

Search terms used included: youth, adolescent, young adult, child, abuse, maltreatment, violence, neglect, assault, rape, representative, national, and school surveys.
Methods

- 217 articles were screened
- 72 different surveys were included - based on 73 articles

Coding key:
- Method of data collection
- Sample characteristics
- Child maltreatment instrument
- Reliability and validity
- Approaches to increase response rate
- Approaches to increase comfort
- Procedures in place to deal with participant distress
- Specification of child maltreatment behaviours
- Prevalence estimates
### Results: Child Maltreatment Prevalence Estimates

- Data collected in 36 countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Child Maltreatment</th>
<th>Prevalence Estimates</th>
<th>Number of Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Abuse</td>
<td>0.3-44.3%</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Abuse</td>
<td>4.2-58.3%</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to Intimate Partner Violence</td>
<td>0.6-30.9%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Maltreatment</td>
<td>3.1-78.3%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect</td>
<td>0.9-38.3%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results: Characteristics of Reviewed Studies

- Range of sample size: 419 – 109,104 respondents
- Response rate: 40.4 - 99.9%
- Data Collection:
  - Self-administered questionnaire: 45
  - Face-to-face interview: 8
  - Telephone: 7
## Results: Reliability and Validity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reliability</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal consistency</td>
<td>11 studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test-retest</td>
<td>1 studies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Validity</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 studies reported validity testing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Results: Characteristics of Review Studies

**Approaches to Increase Comfort of Respondent**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Number of Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anonymity</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consent (parent)</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary Participation</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consent (youth)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy Ensured</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe Setting</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right to Withdraw</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assent (youth)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consent (school)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assent (parent)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Results: Ethical Procedures

Procedures in place for reducing distress:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedures</th>
<th>Number of Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide respondents with information and telephone numbers of support services</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow up with distressed respondents</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train interviewers / use clinical interviewers</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alert appropriate authorities</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion: Summary

Child maltreatment:

- Data can be obtained from youth in representative surveys
- Data quality requires further study
- Research can be ethically conducted
Discussion: Influences on Prevalence Estimates

- Wide variation in estimates
- Definitions of child maltreatment
- Perception of what constitutes discipline versus abuse
- Factors that may affect self-reporting:
  - Fear of retaliation by perpetrator
  - Self-blame
  - Cognitive development and age
  - Stigma
  - Not recognising the behaviour as abusive
  - Parental consent required
Discussion: Quality of Data?

- Limited research conducted on validity and reliability
- Unsatisfactory and limited information provided
- Potential biases
  - Social desirability
  - Representativeness
  - Absenteeism
- Minimal recall bias compared to adults
Discussion: Quality of Data/Ethical Considerations

Influences on response rates:

- Conducting school surveys
- Providing safe setting (especially for younger participants)
- Maximizing privacy
- Guaranteeing anonymity
- Questioning parental consent
  (among youth exposed to maltreatment)
Discussion: Ethical Considerations

- Appropriate measures to address potential risk of emotional distress:
  - Protect confidentiality
  - Administer questionnaire sensitively and appropriately
  - Obtain informed consent/assent
  - Provide follow-up intervention if necessary
- Youth are generally comfortable answering child maltreatment questions
- Lack of data on effectiveness of distress reducing procedures
Discussion: Distress - Participation

• No participation due to content – 0.3% (Finkelhor et al., 2014)
• Reported being upset but benefits of participation outweighed this feeling (23%) (Ybara et al., 2009)
• Reported some distress (5.7%) (Zajac et al., 2011)
  – Distressed at the end of the survey (0.2%) (Zajac et al., 2011)
• Felt discomfort but still wanted to participate (Helweg-Larsen and Boving-Larsen, 2003)
Limitations of our Review

- Inconsistency in child maltreatment measures across surveys
- Insufficient methodological information
- Prevalence estimates were not provided in a standardised way
- Missing information on validity and reliability
- Only peer-reviewed English articles were included
- Review was mostly limited to article content
Implications

• Child maltreatment is common
• Data on child maltreatment:
  – can be collected from youth safely
  – would enhance our understanding if collected regularly
• Data quality need to be studied and improved
• Follow-up questions on distress could be added to surveys
Suggested Readings

Questions and Comments

Thank you!

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