



CIS-2008 Major Findings Supplementary Tables: Child Age and Sex by Primary Substantiated Maltreatment and Risk

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Introduction

The Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect-2008 (CIS-2008) is the third nation-wide study to examine the incidence of reported child maltreatment and the characteristics of children and families investigated by child welfare authorities in Canada. In addition to the tables presented in the [Major Findings](#) report, the Supplementary Tables Information Sheet Series describes key child, household and investigation characteristics by primary category of substantiated maltreatment including confirmed risk. This Information Sheet examines the age and sex of investigated children.

Findings

There were an estimated 235,842 maltreatment-related investigations conducted in Canada in 2008. An estimated 174,411 investigations were for an incident of maltreatment and an estimated 61,431 were risk-only investigations. At the end of the initial investigation, 49% of maltreatment investigations were substantiated (85,440 investigations) and in 20% of risk investigations, the worker determined there was a significant risk of future maltreatment (12,018 investigations).

Table 1 outlines the sex of investigated children in substantiated maltreatment and confirmed risk investigations. Other than in substantiated sexual abuse investigations (where children were more likely to be female), the proportion of males to females did not vary significantly.

Table 1.

Child sex by primary category of substantiated maltreatment, including confirmed risk of future maltreatment, in Canada in 2008[^]

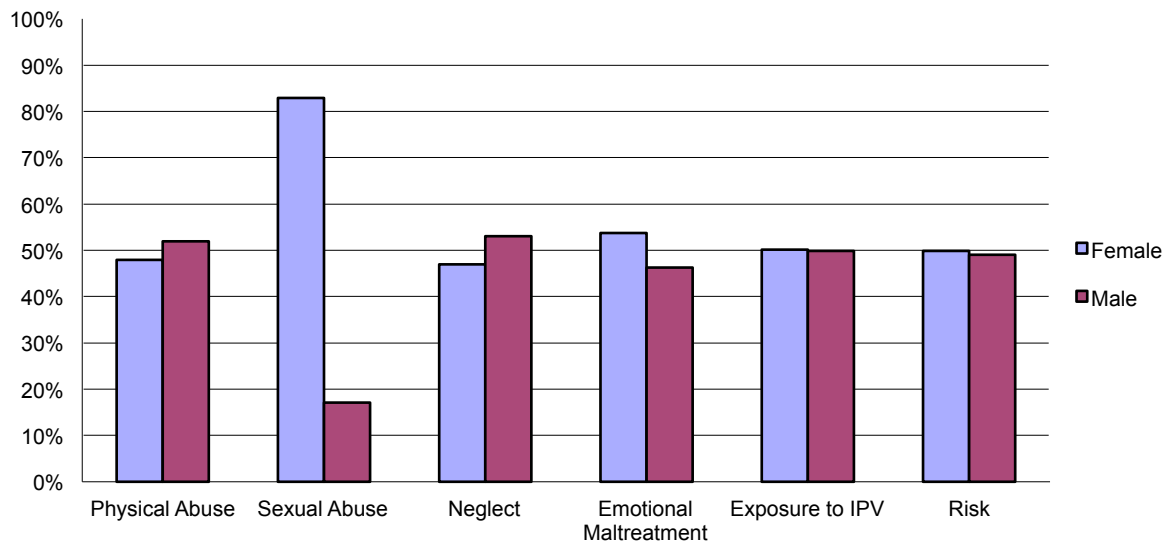
	Primary Category of Maltreatment												Total	
	Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to IPV		Risk			
Child Sex	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Female	8,185	48	2,162	83	13,592	47	3,988	54	14,663	50	6,060	50	48,650	50
Male	9,028	52	445	17	15,346	53	3,435	46	14,596	50	5,958	50	48,808	50
Total	17,213	100	2,607	100	28,938	100	7,423	100	29,259	100	12,018	100	97,458	100

[^] Based on a sample of 7,032 substantiated child maltreatment-related investigations with information about child sex. Percentages are column percentages.

Please see Figure 1 for a visual representation of these findings.

Figure 1.

Child sex by primary category of substantiated maltreatment, including confirmed risk of future maltreatment, in Canada in 2008



The age of investigated children in substantiated maltreatment and confirmed risk investigations is displayed in Table 2. Overall, substantiated maltreatment or confirmed risk of maltreatment was evenly distributed across all age groups, however, as shown in Table 2, there are noteworthy differences by form of maltreatment. Children were most likely to be age 12 to 15 in substantiated physical abuse, sexual abuse, and emotional maltreatment investigations. Almost two thirds (63%) of substantiated exposure to intimate partner violence (IPV) investigations and just over half (51%) of substantiated neglect investigations involved children under the age of 7. The proportion of investigations across age groups is similar in confirmed risk investigations.

Table 2.

Child age by primary category of substantiated maltreatment, including confirmed risk of future maltreatment, in Canada in 2008[^]

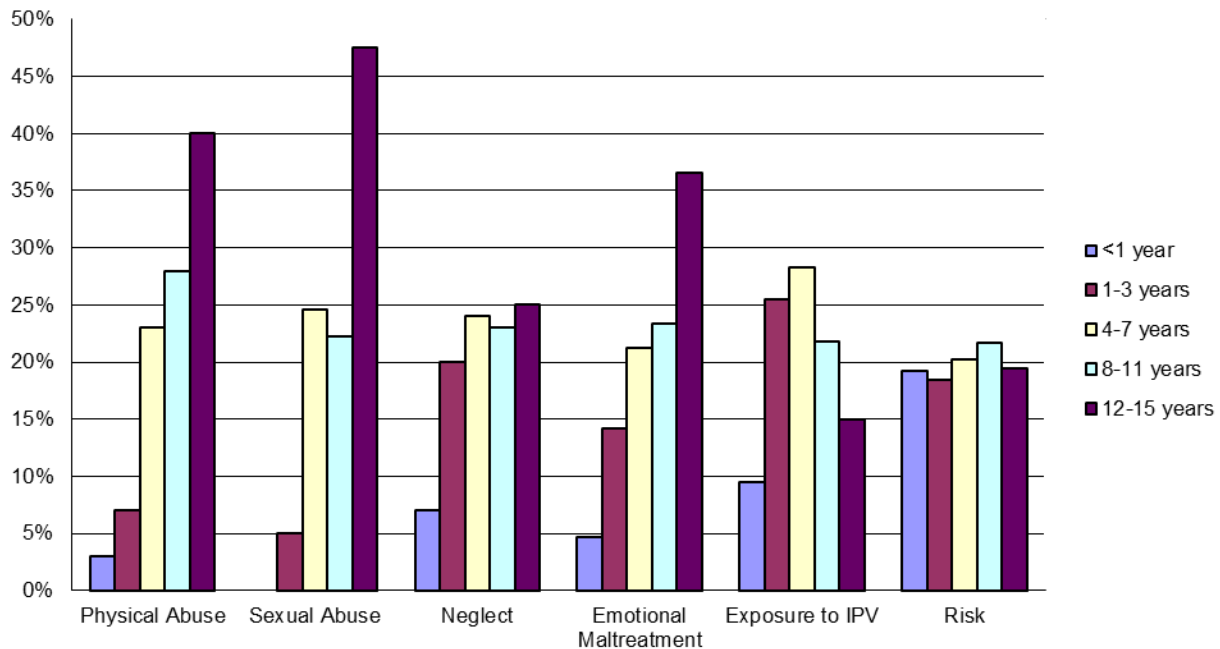
	Primary Category of Maltreatment												Total	
	Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to IPV		Risk			
Child Age	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
< 1 year	542	3	-	-	2,103	7	345	5	2,767	9	2,335	19	8,109	8
1-3 years	1,124	7	132	5	5,856	20	1,050	14	7,473	26	2,234	19	17,869	18
4-7 years	3,977	23	640	25	6,945	24	1,578	21	8,276	28	2,457	20	23,873	24
8-11 years	4,744	28	580	22	6,723	23	1,738	23	6,371	22	2,630	22	22,786	23
12-15 years	6,825	40	1,238	47	7,311	25	2,713	37	4,372	15	2,362	20	24,821	25
Total	17,212	100	2,607	100	28,938	100	7,424	100	29,259	100	12,018	100	97,458	100

[^] Based on a sample of 7,032 substantiated child maltreatment-related investigations with information about child age. Percentages are column percentages, but may not add to 100% because of rounding.
 - Estimates of less than 100 investigations are not shown, but are included in the total.

Please see Figure 2 for a visual representation of these findings.

Figure 2.

Child age by primary category of substantiated maltreatment, including confirmed risk of future maltreatment, in Canada in 2008



Background

Responsibility for protecting and supporting children at risk of abuse and neglect falls under the jurisdiction of the 13 Canadian provinces and territories and a system of Aboriginal child welfare agencies which have increasing responsibility for protecting and supporting Aboriginal children. Because of variations in the types of situations that each jurisdiction includes under its child welfare mandate as well as differences in the way service statistics are kept, it is difficult to obtain a nation-wide profile of the children and families receiving child welfare services. The Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (CIS) is designed to provide such a profile by collecting information on a periodic basis from every jurisdiction using a standardized set of definitions. With core funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada and in-kind and financial support from a consortium of federal, provincial, territorial, Aboriginal and academic stakeholders, the CIS-2008 is the third nation-wide study of the incidence and characteristics of investigated child abuse and neglect across Canada.

Methodology

The CIS-2008 used a multi-stage sampling design to select a representative sample of 112 child welfare agencies in Canada and then to select a sample of cases within these agencies. Information was collected directly from child welfare workers on a representative sample of 15,980 child protection investigations conducted during a three-month sampling period in the fall of 2008. This sample was weighted to reflect provincial annual estimates.

For maltreatment investigations, information was collected regarding the primary form of maltreatment investigated as well as the level of substantiation for that maltreatment. Thirty-two forms of maltreatment were listed on the data collection instrument, and these were collapsed into five broad categories: physical abuse (e.g., hit with hand), sexual abuse (e.g., exploitation), neglect (e.g., educational neglect), emotional maltreatment (e.g., verbal abuse or belittling), and exposure to intimate partner violence (e.g., direct witness to physical violence). Workers listed the primary concern for the investigation, and could also list secondary and tertiary concerns.

For each form of maltreatment listed, workers assigned a level of substantiation. Maltreatment could be substantiated (i.e., the balance of evidence indicated that the maltreatment had occurred), suspected (i.e., the maltreatment could neither be confirmed nor ruled out), or unfounded (i.e., the balance of evidence indicated that the maltreatment had not occurred).

For each risk investigation, workers determined whether the child was at significant risk of future maltreatment. The worker could decide that the child was at significant risk of future maltreatment (confirmed risk), that the child was not at significant risk of future maltreatment (unfounded risk), or that the future risk of maltreatment was unknown.

A detailed presentation of the study methodology and of the definitions of each variable is available at <http://cwrp.ca/publications/cis-2008-study-methods>.

Limitations

The CIS collects information directly from child welfare workers at the point when they completed their initial investigation of a report of possible child abuse or neglect, or risk of

future maltreatment. Therefore, the scope of the study is limited to the type of information available to them at that point. The CIS does not include information about unreported maltreatment nor about cases that were investigated only by the police. Also, reports that were made to child welfare authorities but were screened out (not opened for investigation) were not included. Similarly, reports on cases currently open at the time of case selection were not included. The study did not track longer-term service events that occurred beyond the initial investigation.

Three limitations to estimation method used to derive annual estimated should also be noted. The agency size correction uses child population as a proxy for agency size; this does not account for variations in per capita investigation rates across agencies in the same strata. The annualization weight corrects for seasonal fluctuation in the volume of investigations, but it does not correct for seasonal variations in types of investigations conducted. Finally, the annualization weight includes cases that were investigated more than once in the year as a result of the case being re-opened following a first investigation completed earlier in the same year. Accordingly, the weighted annual estimates represent the child maltreatment-related investigations, rather than investigated children.

Comparisons across CIS reports must be made with caution. The forms of maltreatment tracked by each cycle were modified to take into account changes in investigation mandates and practices. Comparisons across cycles must in particular take into consideration the fact that the CIS-2008 was the first to explicitly track risk-only investigations. In addition, readers are cautioned to avoid making direct comparisons with provincial and First Nations oversampling reports because of differences in the way national and oversampling estimates are derived.

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