



# CIS-2008 Major Findings Supplementary Tables: Housing Conditions by Primary Substantiated Maltreatment and Risk

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Prepared by Rachael Lefebvre, Barbara Fallon & Nico Trocmé based on:

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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 housing conditions.

## 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).

Home overcrowding was noted as a concern in 10% of cases of substantiated maltreatment or confirmed risk. Home overcrowding by primary category of substantiated maltreatment including confirmed risk is shown in Table 1. Home overcrowding was noted most frequently in substantiated neglect investigations (15%), followed by substantiated emotional maltreatment investigations (14%), confirmed risk investigations (11%), substantiated sexual abuse investigations (9%), substantiated physical abuse investigations (6%) and substantiated exposure to intimate partner violence (IPV) investigations (6%).

Table 1.

*Home overcrowding by primary category of substantiated maltreatment, including confirmed risk of future maltreatment, in Canada in 2008<sup>^</sup>*

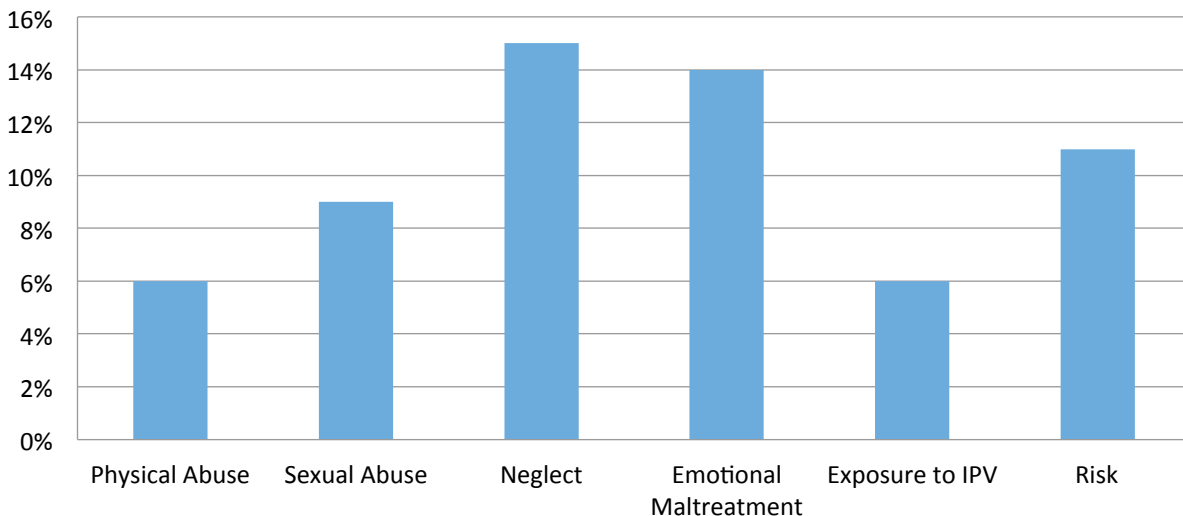
	Primary Category of Maltreatment												Total	
	Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to IPV		Risk			
<b>Home Overcrowded</b>	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Yes	1,025	6	229	9	4,307	15	1,035	14	1,642	6	1,364	11	9,602	10
No	15,925	92	2,191	84	23,622	82	6,191	83	27,034	93	9,909	82	84,872	87
Unknown	263	2	176	7	983	3	197	3	516	2	746	6	2,881	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,213</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2,596</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>28,912</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>7,423</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>29,192</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>12,019</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>97,355</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>^</sup> Based on a sample of 7,026 substantiated child maltreatment-related investigations with information about home overcrowding. Percentages are column percentages, but may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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

Figure 1.

*Home overcrowding by primary category of substantiated maltreatment, including confirmed risk of future maltreatment, in Canada in 2008*



Workers were asked to identify the presence of hazards in the home. Table 2 displays documented household hazards by primary category of substantiated maltreatment including confirmed risk. Workers were most likely to document household hazards in substantiated neglect investigations. Among neglect investigations, the investigating worker identified other

home health hazards in 14% of investigations, other home injury hazards and drugs or drug paraphernalia in 10% of investigations, drug production or trafficking in the home in 3% of investigations and accessible weapons and chemicals or solvents used in the production of drugs in 1% of investigations.

At least one household hazard was noted in just under a quarter of substantiated neglect investigations (24%), 15% of confirmed risk investigations, 10% of substantiated emotional maltreatment investigations, 7% of substantiated sexual abuse investigations, 6% of substantiated exposure to intimate partner violence, and 5% of substantiated physical abuse investigations.

Please note the numbers of specific household hazards in substantiated investigations of sexual abuse were too low to be reliably estimated.

Table 2.

*Household hazards by primary category of substantiated maltreatment, including confirmed risk of future maltreatment, in Canada in 2008<sup>^</sup>*

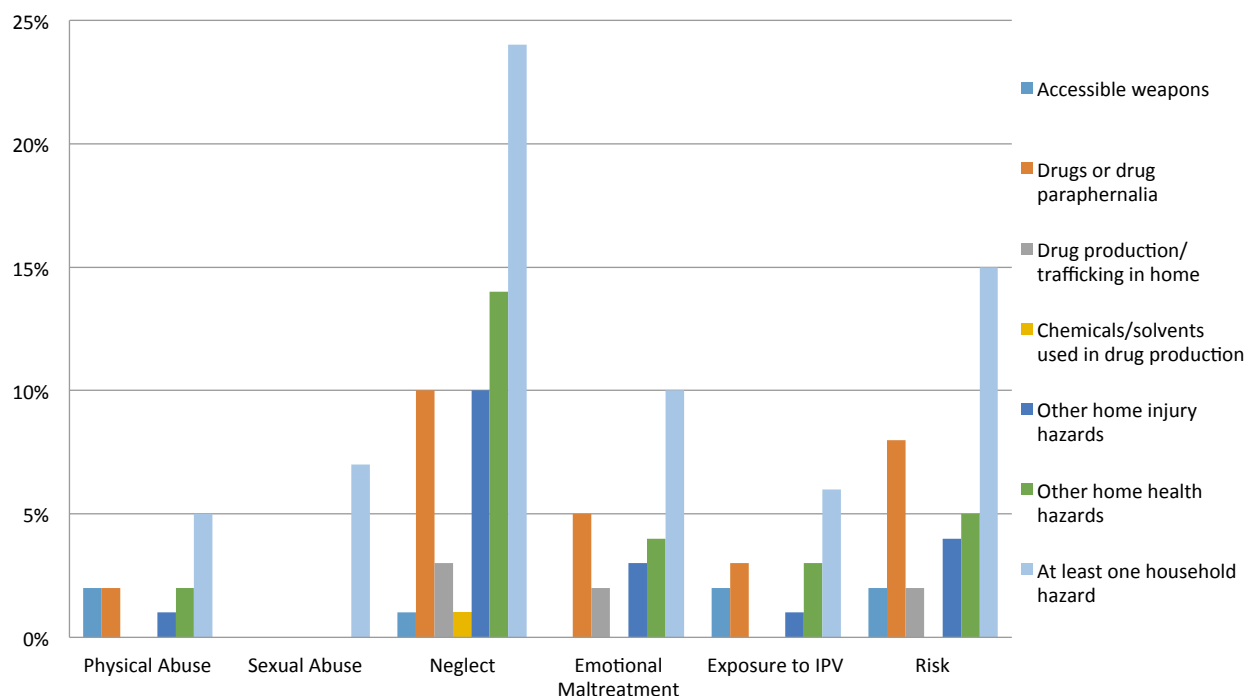
	Primary Category of Maltreatment												Total	
	Physical Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Neglect		Emotional Maltreatment		Exposure to IPV		Risk			
Household Hazards	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
No exposure to household hazards	16,269	94	2,418	93	21,906	76	6,699	90	27,563	94	10,199	85	85,054	87
Type of household hazard														
Accessible weapons	344	2	-	-	431	2	-	-	469	2	197	2	1,555	2
Accessible drugs or paraphernalia	400	2	-	-	2,928	10	390	5	774	3	1,002	8	5,573	6
Drug production/trafficking in home	-	-	-	-	967	3	127	2	-	-	292	2	1,520	2
Chemicals/solvents - drug production	-	-	-	-	351	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	556	1
Other home injury hazards	190	1	-	-	2,797	10	208	3	410	1	534	4	4,208	4
Other home health hazards	383	2	-	-	4,050	14	288	4	753	3	637	5	6,176	6
At least one household hazard	943	6	189	7	7,033	24	724	10	1,696	6	1,819	15	12,404	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,212</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2,607</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>28,939</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>7,423</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>29,259</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>12,018</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>97,458</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>^</sup> Based on a sample of 7,026 substantiated child maltreatment-related investigations with information about household hazards. 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.  
*Household hazards 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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