Young Maltreatment Perpetrators' Past Experiences With Child Protective Services: Findings from NCANDS

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NCANDS Overview

The National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) is a federally sponsored effort (CB/ACYF/ACF/HHS) to collect nationally standardized case-level and aggregate data about children who were known to child protective services (CPS) agencies. NCANDS is a voluntary system and data are collected annually on federal fiscal year (FFY) schedule from 52 states (includes District of Columbia and Puerto Rico). The Children's Bureau releases NCANDS data in the Child Maltreatment report available at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/research-data-technology/statistics-research/child-maltreatment

Perpetrators

NCANDS defines a perpetrator as a person who was determined to have caused or knowingly allowed the maltreatment of a child.

- Associated only with children with substantiated or indicated maltreatments.
- States report data for up to three perpetrators for each child in each report.
- Perpetrators can be reported as young as age 6 depending on state policy.
- Perpetrator variables include: demographics (age, sex, race/ethnicity), relationship to the child and type of maltreatment.

Unique Perpetrators in Child Maltreatment 2017
n=537,393 (52 states)

2% were younger than 18 years
54% were female
78% were parents

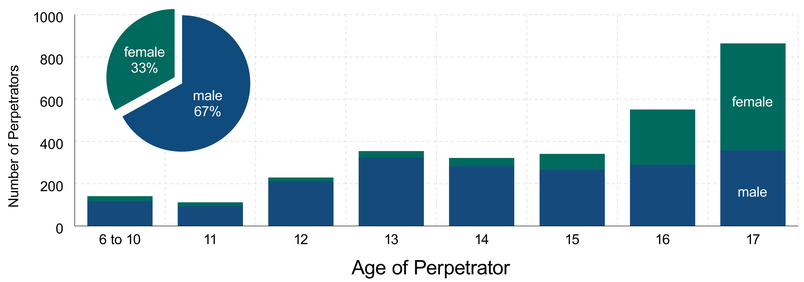
State Policies for Age of Perpetrators in NCANDS

States have different polices about screening in maltreatment allegations (referrals) and substantiating maltreatment reports in which the perpetrator is younger than 18 years:

- Do not screen in referrals if the perpetrator is younger than a certain age, which is set at 18, 16, 14, 13, 12, and 10 in certain states.
- Only screen in referrals in which a perpetrator is in a caregiving role.
- Only screen in referrals in which a perpetrator is a parent.

Perpetrators Younger than 18 Years, 2017 (unique count)
N=2,914, 27 States

Age and Sex of Perpetrators



A majority of young perpetrators are in two groups:

52% of Young Perpetrators are **Male Relatives Who Are Perpetrators of Sexual Abuse.**

25% of Young Perpetrators are **Mothers Who Are Perpetrators of Neglect.**

Overall, **56%** of these young perpetrators **have had prior contact with CPS** during the previous 10 years.

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This Study:

This study explored whether young perpetrators have had prior contact with CPS as victims or as nonvictims.

States use unique person ID to identify each person in the NCANDS Child File, whether the person is a child who is a subject of a report or a perpetrator.

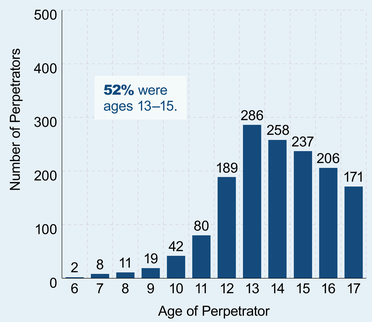
If a child who is the subject of a maltreatment report later becomes a maltreatment perpetrator, the same ID is used.

Method

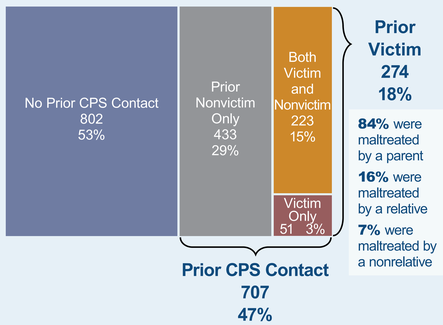
1. Selected 27 states with unique person IDs with sufficient data quality for child and perpetrator IDs back to 2008.
2. Identified first time perpetrators younger than age 18 in these states in the 2017 Child File.
3. Constructed multi-year data file for 2008-2017.
4. For each young perpetrator in 2017 sample, identified occurrences in which they were a child in a report from 2008-2017.
5. Conducted data quality checks to confirm that these are the same individuals.
6. Created file with unique perpetrators and aggregated records of prior CPS contact between 2008 and 2017.

Young Male Relatives Who Are Perpetrators of Sexual Abuse (n=1,509, 18 states)

Age of Perpetrator (n=1,509)

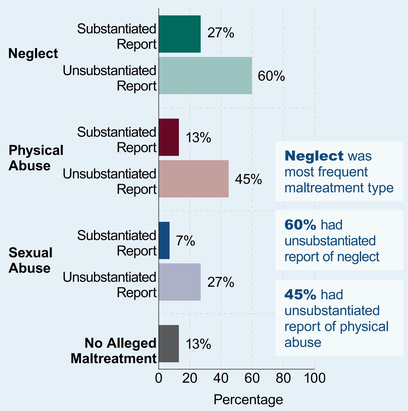


Prior CPS Contact (n=1,509)

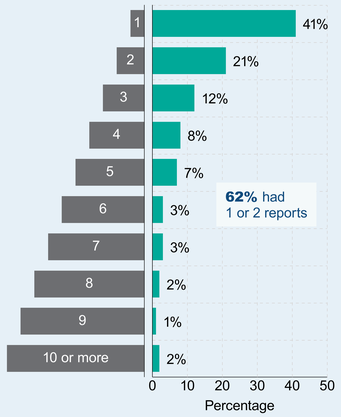


Prior CPS Contact (n=707)

Maltreatment Type and Disposition



Number of Reports

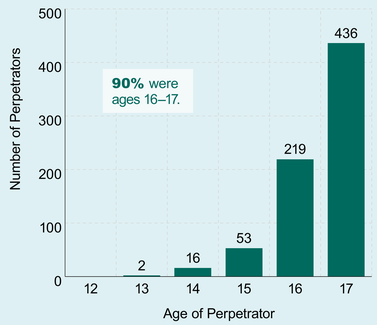


Services Received

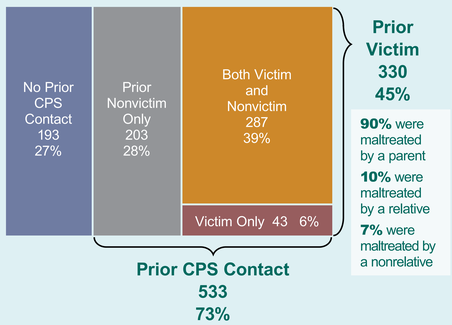
47% received in-home services
18% had been in foster care

Young Mothers Who Are Perpetrators of Neglect (n=726, 25 states)

Age of Perpetrator (n=726)

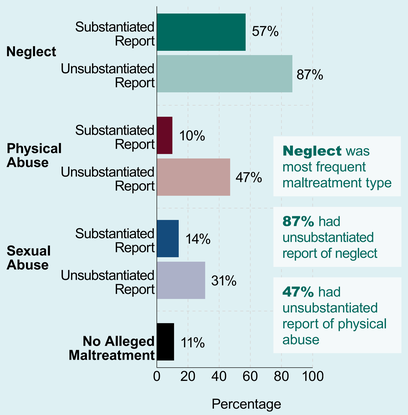


Prior CPS Contact (n=726)



Prior CPS Contact (n=533)

Maltreatment Type and Disposition



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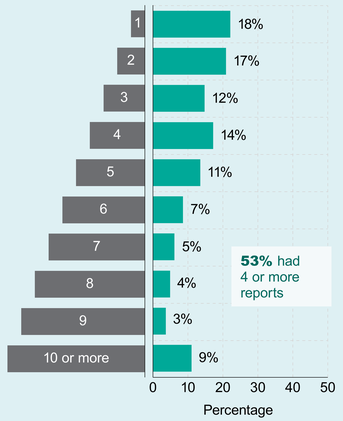

Services Received

66% received in-home services
36% had been in foster care