Is the Urgent-Chronic taxonomy applicable in a US Context? A National Study on Child and Adolescent Well-Being Analysis

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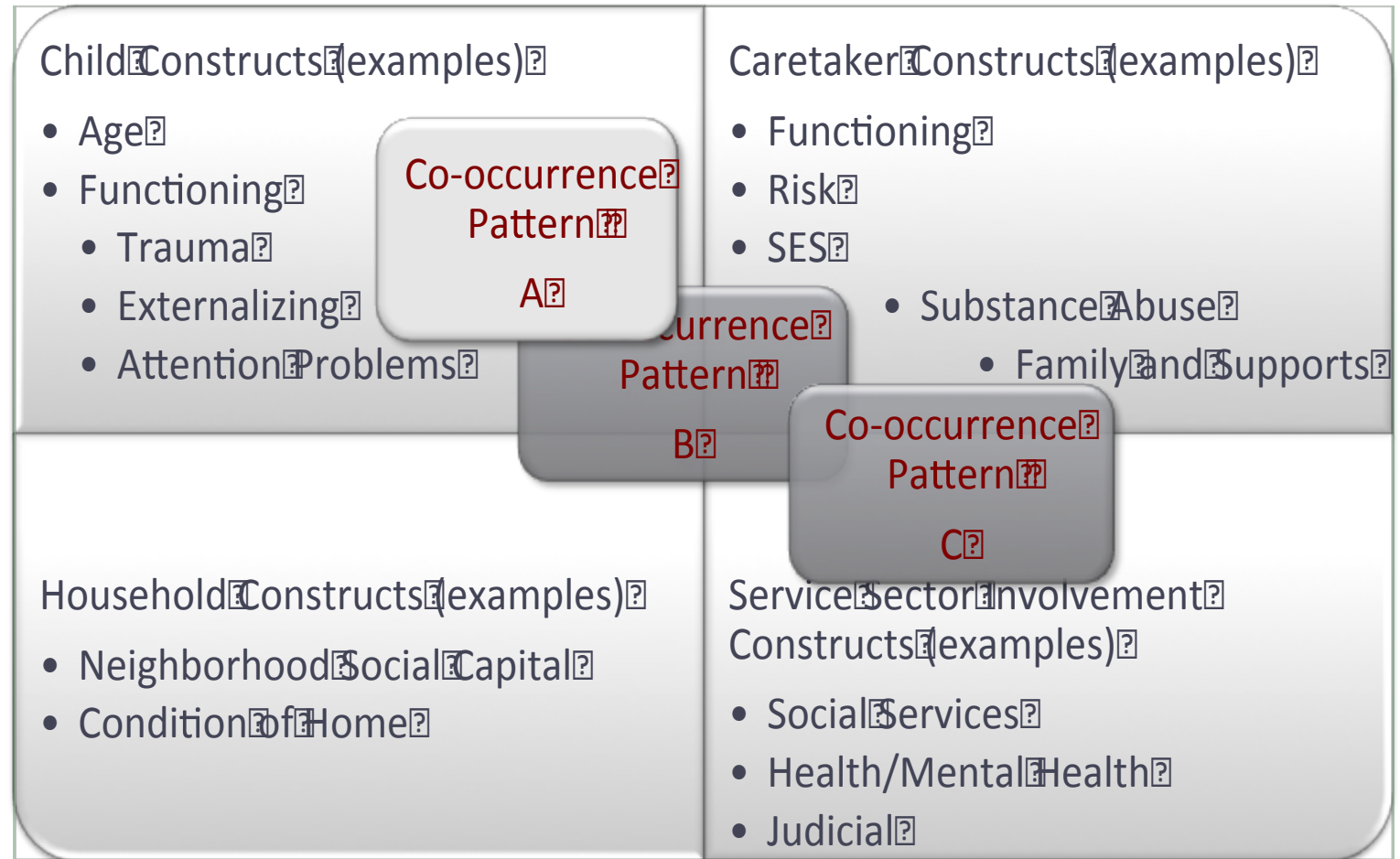
Objectives

- Child Protection responses in child welfare systems are usually classified by the type of maltreatment that is alleged; typically physical abuse, neglect, sexual maltreatment, and psychological maltreatment ;

- Trocmé et al (2014) identified a classification for CPS responses for Canadian child welfare that are characterized as urgent and chronic;

- Depending on the classification, certain outcomes (recurrence) are more common amongst one group compared to the other;

- explores whether US CPS responses can also be classified in a similar way

- This sort of classification approach may have important implications for Re-Thinking Child Welfare;

Implications: Central Ideas of a Needs Based Classification Approach and Modification of Decision Space
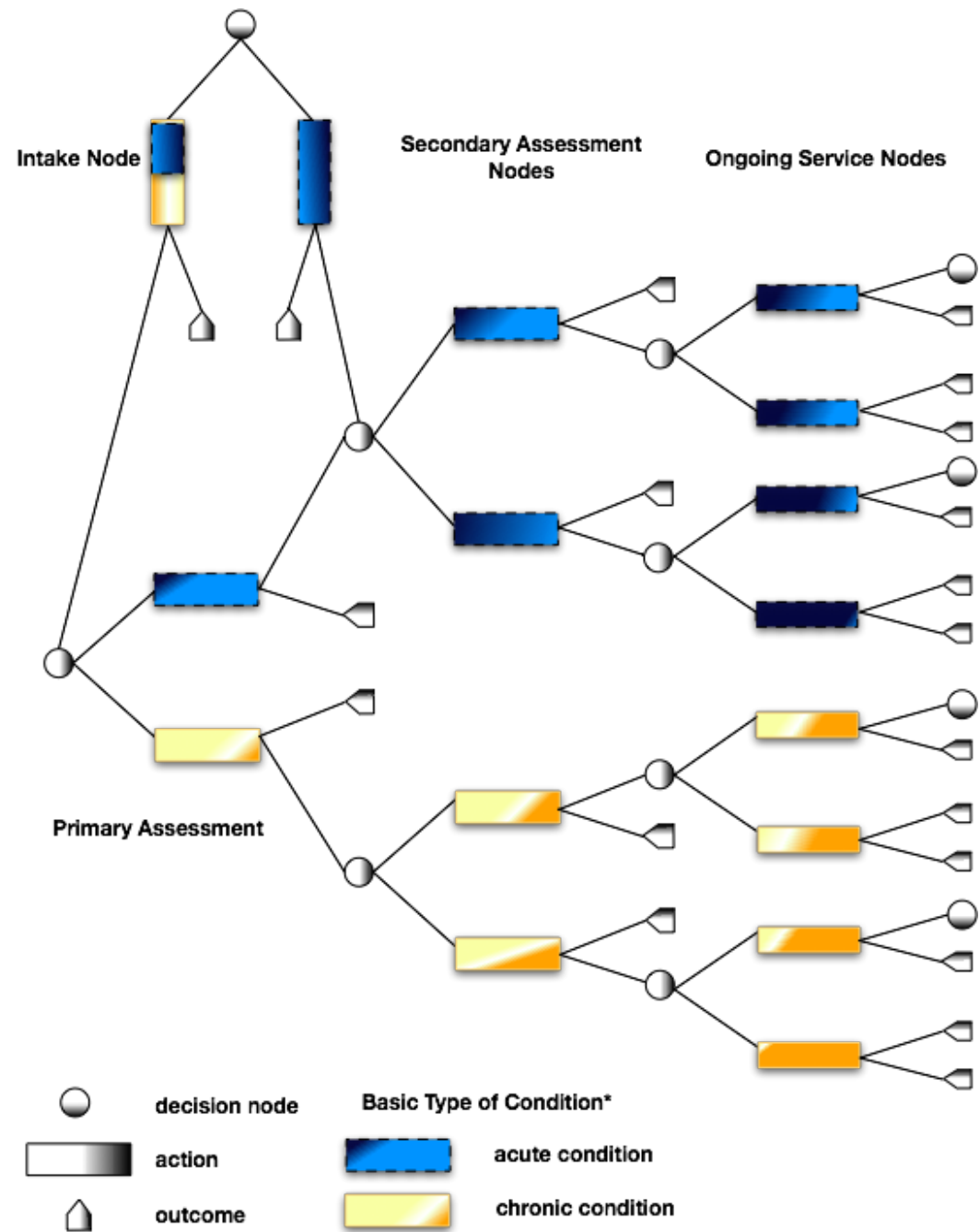
Assumption: We Can Do Better Integrating Research and Practice

1. Develop classes of CPS families that share common needs around which we can begin to assemble the best array of evidence based services

2. Emphasize assessments and approaches to family engagement based on the principle of improving service uptake.

3. Develop ways to determine decisional error, that is, contextually based ways to determine when errors in decision making actually occur.

Needs Based Framework: Single Pattern Class Conceptual View

Child Constructs (examples)

- Age
- Functioning
  - Trauma
  - Externalizing
  - Attention Problems

Caretaker Constructs (examples)

- Functioning
- Risk
- SES
  - Substance Abuse
    - Family and Supports

Co-occurrence Pattern A

Co-occurrence Pattern B

Co-occurrence Pattern C

Household Constructs (examples)

- Neighborhood Social Capital
- Condition of Home

Service Sector Involvement Constructs (examples)

- Social Services
- Health/Mental Health
- Judicial

Decision State Space

Intake Node

Secondary Assessment Nodes

Ongoing Service Nodes

Primary Assessment

○ decision node

▭ action

⌂ outcome

Basic Type of Condition*

▬ acute condition

▭ chronic condition

*Gradations indicate knowledge of condition

Rationale for the Approach to Replicating the Canadian Classification Taxonomy Applied to the US

- The Canadian and US systems of Child Protection Share Some Similarities
  - Based on systems of mandatory reporting
  - Child Protection response initiated on the basis of an allegation of maltreatment
- Why use the National Study on Child and Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW)?
  - Representative Sample of US Children in Child Protection Assessments
  - Detailed Information Regarding Characteristics that are Used in the Canadian Classification Taxonomy are Available in NSCAW

Methods

NSCAW II

- second cohort of the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW II), US

- two-stage stratified sampling design:

- (1) selected nine sampling strata consisting of the eight states with the largest child welfare caseloads and the remainder of the US

- Primary sampling units (PSUs) (geographic areas that encompassed the population served by a CPS agency), were selected within each of the nine strata.

- (2) The same numbers of families were then sampled within each of the 83 selected PSUs.

- sampled cases from CPS investigations that were closed between February 2008 and April 2009 nationwide (n = 5873).

- final sample of children was representative of the US population of children birth to 17 years of age in families being investigated for allegations of maltreatment

Methods Continued

NSCAW II

Cohort includes:

- all referrals that received a CPS response
- substantiated and unsubstantiated investigations;
- cases that received family preservation services following an investigation and those who did not receive services;
- families who had their children removed to foster care.

Data Collection:

- Face-to-face interviews with children and current caregiver by trained NSCAW practitioners were completed 4 months after the close of the investigation.
- interviewers then conducted in-person interviews about the investigation at the child welfare agency with the caseworker assigned to the child's case.
- In addition data were merged with NCANDS and AFCARS data

Urgent-Chronic Methods

- Canadian taxonomy was applied to NSCAW Cohort
- Aim: Characterize a US representative sample of child welfare responses as urgent or chronic consistent with the Canadian constructs
- Hypothesis: the same proportion of urgent-chronic cases would be represented in the NSCAW data

Measures

- **Urgent/Chronic Constructs**
  - **Urgent:** classified by the investigated caseworker as resulting in moderate or severe harm; included allegations of neglect, physical abuse, under the age of 4; all sexual abuse investigations.
  - **Chronic**: All other forms of abuse and neglect allegations

- **Disposition Outcomes**
  - **Substantiation.** Caseworkers reported whether the evidence of abuse or neglect was substantiated, indicated, or neither substantiated nor indicated.
  - "Indicated" is a term used in some states to denote that evidence of abuse or neglect exists, but not at a sufficient level to warrant substantiating the allegations.
  - substantiated or indicated determinations were coded as 1 and all others as other.

- **Placement into out-of-home care**. Caregivers reporting that they were kinship, foster, or adoptive placements at the time of interview were classified as out of home placements and = 1. Biological placements were = 0.

- **Parental mental illness**. CPS caseworkers reported whether the primary caregiver had any serious mental health or emotional problems.

Measures Continued

- **Child health**. Caregivers reports on overall child health and responses were dichotomized as either excellent/very good/good health or fair/poor health.

- **Disability status**. Caregivers reported whether the child under their care has ever been given an Individual Family and Service Plan (IFSP) or an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

- **Behavior Problems**. Child behavioral and emotional problems were measured by the caregiver reported Child Behavior Checklist: score more than 1.5 standard deviations above the mean was categorized as having a behavioral problem.

- **Functional dependence**. Caregiver reported Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale's (VABS) daily living skills subscale; score of more than 1.5 standard deviations below the mean was categorized as having a functional limitation.

Analysis

- All analyses were performed using STATA Statistical Software Release 13. Due to the complex sampling design, all percentages were adjusted, or weighted, for sample probabilities using STATA's survey commands

Results

- Overall classification
  - 20% were classified as urgent, 80% Chronic
    - (24% of Ontario OCANDS urgent investigation)
- Characteristics of Urgent and Chronic children
  - 34% of urgent cases are substantiated compared to only 23% of non-urgent cases.
  - 17% of urgent cases were placed into out of home care compared to only 11% of non-urgent cases.
  - 9% of urgent cases had a child with a special need compared to 23% of non-urgent cases.
  - absence of a significant difference between behavioral problems and urgent cases.

Results

Variables	%	SE
Urgent	20	-1.1
Child race		
Black/Non-Hispanic	23	-2.67
White/Non-Hispanic	42	-3.9
Hispanic	28	-3.51
Other	7	-0.95
Female	49	-1.25
Substantiated	25	-1.57
Out of home placement	13	-1.11
Parent mental illness	14	-1.44
Child poor health	5	-0.59
Child with special needs	20	-1.43
Child behavioral problems	18	-1.15
Child functionally impaired	16	-1.08

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Results

Characteristics of Cases	Taxonomy (%)	
	Urgent	Chronic
Substantiated	34 (2.87)	23 (1.52)
Out of home placement	17 (2.10)	11 (1.01)
Parent mental illness	23 (3.42)	12 (1.12)
Child with special needs	9 (1.77)	23 (1.79)
Child functionally impaired	28 (2.70)	13 (1.12)
Child poor health		
Child behavioral problems[a]	ns	

Implications

- The classification scheme proposed by Trocme et al (2014) for CPS responses has important implications for systems of intervention if results are replicated in the US.

- Some Degree of Evidence for Generalizability of the Canadian Classification Taxonomy suggests that it may also be possible to generalize intervention approaches in North America

- Unlike maltreatment type alone, the scheme may be useful in refining response tracks.

- More effectively targeting initial planning for intervention, and redefining decision state space.

- Next Steps
  - Recommendations for State Level Data Analysis
  - Analysis of Outcomes – Re-reporting and Recurrence