The Pattern of Chronic Maltreatment: A Latent Growth Curve Analysis

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Chronic Maltreatment

• The issue of child maltreatment recurrence
  – A primary child safety indicator

• Definition of chronic maltreatment
  – Three and more incidents in a row

• Why chronic maltreatment a special concern?
  – Imposes persistent harm to children
  – consumes disproportional child welfare resources
  – challenges current intervention strategies
Prevalence of Chronic Child Maltreatment

• 11% of cases in 3 years follow-up using data from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (Fluke et al., 2005)

• 24% of studied families that involved in a statewide large family preservation and support program (Chaffin et al, 2011)

• 42% of studied families in a 4 years follow-up period in Missouri, and 19% studied families in a 27 months follow-up period in a county in Minnesota (Loman, 2006).
Research Base for Chronic Maltreatment

• Recurrence research
  – Majority research focuses on one single recurrence
    • Prevalence of recurrence
    • Pattern of recurrence (recurrence trend over time)
    • Factors predicting recurrence
  – Some studies describe chronic maltreatment
  – A few studies distinguish chronic maltreatment cases from one single recurrence cases (Bae, et. al; 2009)
Research In Chronic Maltreatment (cont.)

• Increasing interest in the trajectory of chronic child maltreatment
  – Identify case trajectories based on maltreatment risk/protective scores over time (Chaffin, et. al, 2011)
  – Identify case trajectories based on recurrence pattern over time: no re-reports, continuous re-reports, intermittent re-reports, and early re-reports (Proctor, et. al, 2012)
Limitation of Previous Research

• Most recurrence studies focus on one single recurrence
• A few studies concerning maltreatment trajectories emphasize on classifying cases
• No study examines the change of maltreatment intensity over time
Research Question

• What is the trajectory of maltreatment frequency among chronic maltreatment cases across multiple sessions?
Methods

• Data
  – The Illinois Child Abuse and Neglect Tracing System (CANTS), the state administrative dataset that records all child maltreatment reports and subsequent investigation procedures and findings

• Sample (N=2,781)
  – Had at least one maltreatment report in the one year period before the 2 year studied period (July 1st 2009 to June 30th 2011)
  – Had at least two re-reports
  – Had no foster care experience
Methods (cont.)

• Measures
  – Outcome variable: number of maltreatment reports in four 6-month consecutive sessions (0, 1, 2 and more re-reports)
Model Illustration

- Child / caregiver age
- Child / Caregiver disability
- In-home services
- Substantiation
- # Children / Caregivers
- Other covariates

Slope

- 1st 6 month
- 2nd 6 month
- 3rd 6 month
- 4th 6 month

Intercept

- 1
- 1
- 1
- 1
Measures (cont.)

• Covariates
  – Child/caregiver age, race, gender, child/caregiver disability, initial maltreatment types, substantiation status, number of children/caregivers at home, and caregivers’ relationship with the children
Model Fit

• Model has a good fit
  – Chi-square (df=35, n=2781) =62.48, p<.01
  – Comparative fit index=.97
  – RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) = .02
Sample Characteristics

Child gender

- Boy: 52%
- Girl: 48%

Caregiver gender

- Male: 29%
- Female: 71%

Child race

- White: 67%
- Black: 25%
- Hispa...: 8%

Caregiver race

- White: 69%
- Black: 21%
- Hispa...: 10%
Sample Characteristics

Parent-child relation

- Parent: 89%
- Non-parent: 11%

# of children at home

- 1 child: 18%
- 2 children: 25%
- 3 or more children: 25%
- 4 or more children: 15%
- 5 or more children: 17%

# of caregivers at home

- 1 caregiver: 34%
- 2 caregivers: 52%
- 3 or more caregivers: 14%

Age

- Child age: 8
- Caregiver age: 34
Sample Characteristics (cont.)

**Family in-home services**
- Services: 17%
- No services: 83%

**Maltreatment type**
- Sexa: 9%
- Phys: 24%
- Sup: 17%
- Envi: 16%
- Oth: 34%

**Substantiation Status**
- Unsub: 72%
- Substa: 28%

**Child disability**
- Disability: 10%
- Nondisability: 90%
Sample Characteristics (cont.)

Frequency of re-reports over the four sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of reports</th>
<th>1st 6 months (%)</th>
<th>2nd 6 months (%)</th>
<th>3rd 6 months (%)</th>
<th>4th 6 months (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 &amp; more</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results

• Mean growth trajectory for maltreatment frequency is -.43, indicating decrease in intensity over the four observational sessions
Results (cont.)

- Factors predicting the slope (change magnitude)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Covariates</th>
<th>Slope (b)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child age</td>
<td>.013**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caregiver age</td>
<td>.005*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child disability</td>
<td>-.16**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-home services</td>
<td>.28***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>substantiated</td>
<td>-.09**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental neglect (vs. Other)</td>
<td>-.017**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussions

• Advance knowledge of chronic maltreatment in terms of the change of maltreatment intensity over time
• Reveal factors predictive of such a trajectory
• Provide implications for service programs concerning chronic maltreatment
Limitations

• No specific maltreatment intensity measures, and a proxy (number of maltreatment reports in a observation session) has to be used

• Lack family social economic information
Thank you!
Contact Information

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