

Meta-analysis of substance abuse treatment intervention on child welfare outcomes

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Substance Abuse and Child Welfare: Scope of the Problem

- *An estimated 50-80%* of families in the Child Welfare System are affected by substance use disorders (De Bellis, Hall, Boring, Frustaci, & Moritz, 2001; GAO, 1998; Jones, 2004)
- **74%** of foster care cases in Illinois and **65%** in California are estimated to be affected by substance use disorders (GAO, 1998)

Impact of Parental Substance Use on Families

- Children removed due to parental substance use are less likely to achieve reunification with their family, and stay in substitute care much longer (Maluccio & Ainworth, 2003).
- Children whose parents have substance use problems have a higher risk of maltreatment recurrence (Smith & Testa, 2002), and worse child well-being outcomes (Conners, Bradley, Whiteside Mansell, et al., 2004).

Examples of Interventions with Demonstrated Effectiveness

- Recovery Coach
 - Intense case management in which recovery coaches engage in various activities including clinical assessments, advocacy, service planning, outreach, and case management (Ryan et. al. 2006).
- Inter-Agency Coordination
 - A “lead agency” coordinates multiple community service agencies for intense services provision (Brook & McDonald, 2007).
- Family Drug Court
 - A collaborative model that emphasizes therapeutic jurisprudence through team based approaches to service needs assessment; linking and engaging parents into services; and case management (Boles et. al. 2007; Bruns et. al. 2015).

Purpose of Study

- To summarize and synthesize findings from published studies of interventions focused on this population
- To determine whether interventions included in the published literature are effective overall and if we can generalize the findings beyond the published studies

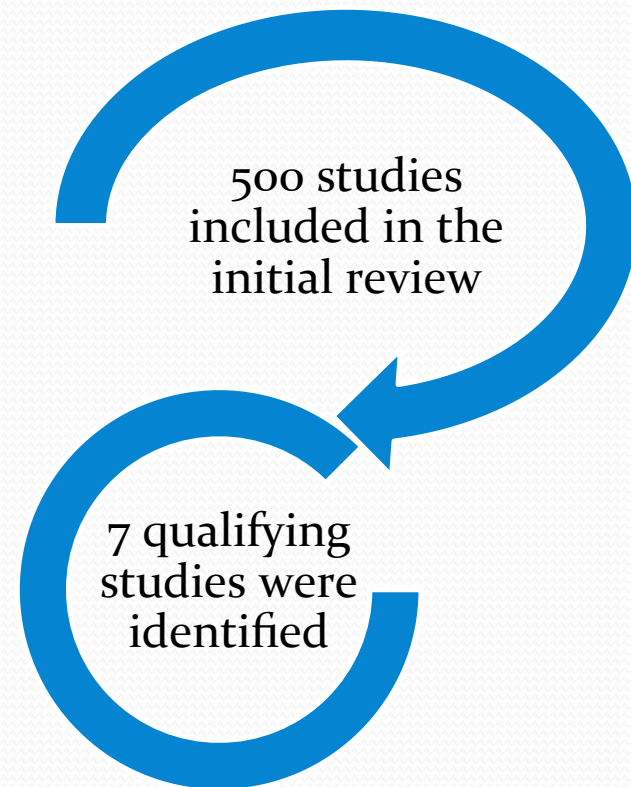
Study Design

- Meta-Analysis: Attempts to assess the overall intervention effect from individual, previously published findings
- Studies were included if they:
 1. Focused on substance abuse treatment intervention for child welfare involved families
 2. Were designed to compare treatment effectiveness between intervention participants and a comparison group
 3. Included at least one child welfare outcome (e.g., reunification or maltreatment recurrence)

Methods

Study selection procedures:

- Publication databases: PsycINFO, Social Services Abstracts, and Pubmed
- Publication Year: 2005-2014
- Key words used in publication search: child welfare, child maltreatment, substance abuse, treatment, intervention, and evaluation



Studies Included in the Meta-Analysis: Summary of Examined Interventions and Outcomes

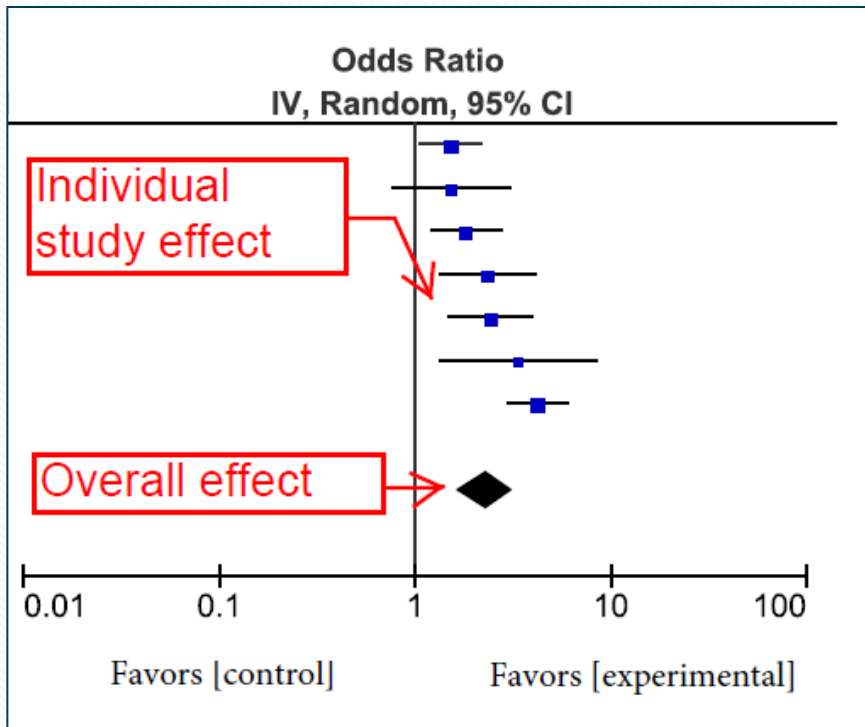
<i>Study</i>	<i>Intervention</i>	<i>Child Welfare Outcome</i>	<i>Other Outcome(s)</i>
Barth (2006)	Substance Use Treatment	Recurrence of maltreatment	
Marsh (2006)	Integrated Service Model	Reunification	
Ryan (2006)	Recovery Coach: Intensive Case Management	Reunification	Access to Substance Use Treatment
Brook (2007)	Comprehensive Service Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reunification • Re-entry to Out of Home Care 	
Ryan (2008)	Recovery Coach: Intensive Case Management	Recurrence of Maltreatment	
Dakof (2009)	Engaging Moms Program: Multidimensional Family Therapy <i>(implemented in a Family Drug Court program)</i>	Permanency: Parental Custody, Termination of Parental Rights, Kinship Caregiver Placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Functioning • Maternal Substance Use
Choi (2012)	Substance Use Treatment <i>(completion)</i>	Reunification	

Studies Included in the Meta-Analysis: Summary of Positive Outcomes

<i>Study</i>	<i>Intervention Group: 12-91% with Positive Outcomes</i>		<i>Comparison Group: 7-79% with Positive Outcomes</i>	
	Total # of Participants in Intervention (N=2,876)	Percentage with Positive Outcomes	Total in Comparison Group (N=1,711)	Percentage with Positive Outcomes
Barth (2006)	219	91%	219	81%
Marsh (2006)	413	16%	311	7%
Ryan (2006)	986	12%	431	7%
Brook (2007)	60	40%	79	30%
Ryan (2008)	670	85%	261	79%
Dakof (2009)	43	70%	37	41%
Choi (2012)	485	38%	373	13%

Note: In Marsh (2006)'s study, the two-group outcome is aggregated from the original four-group outcome.

Results



- Independently, each study demonstrates positive outcomes.
- When aggregated, a positive outcome is 2.3 times more likely among families served by the interventions.

Discussion and Recommendations

- Substance abuse intervention strategies reviewed in these seven published studies appear to significantly improve the likelihood of a positive child welfare outcome.
- Programs and services designed to address the needs of families impacted by substance use should review these strategies and determine if they would be appropriate for their populations.
- Researchers and evaluators should implement more, rigorous studies of these and other interventions to identify additional strategies that improve child welfare outcomes for families impacted by substance use.

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