Each year, more than 1.5 million children are suspected to have suffered maltreatment at the hands of their parents or other significant caregivers with close to 1 million [872,000] confirmed. Typically, such [HM] reports are classified as indicated although a substantiation representative of more active forms of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse are reported as well. Children who are victims of maltreatment are significant risk of conduct disorders in school and dysfunction as adults including serious mental illness and social problems including substance use disorders. Childhood victimization has also been demonstrated to be a significant predictor of child maltreatment perpetuation as adults. As such, understanding the correlates and effective intervention strategies for the treatment of child maltreatment is a significant social issue.

While much research has been done on the predictors of child maltreatment in general, and recurrent/chronic patterns of child maltreatment, the relationship between the characteristics of maltreatment perpetrators and disorders and child maltreatment has been less documented. Similarly, the impact of potential substance abuse treatment upon the recurrence of child maltreatment has not been the focus of extensive research.

Arizona Families FIRST is a statewide program designed to provide assertive outreach and engagement to child welfare involved parents under investigation for child maltreatment, coupled with substance abuse treatment services. AFF services are delivered through a network of nine community-based agencies under contract with the Arizona Department of Economic Security, which operates Child Protective Services, and in partnership with the Arizona Department of Health Services, the State family court system. Substance abuse treatment services.

The purpose of this study was to assess the rates of child maltreatment among families participating in the Arizona Families FIRST program over period of 5.75 years. Among those clients referred to AFF during 2004 (July 1, 2004 – June 30, 2005) and tracked through March 30, 2010, the following research questions were posed:

1. What is the relative rate of child maltreatment recurrence during the study period?
2. What characteristics of AFF clients at the time of intake, including self-reported or substance abuse treatment services, were associated with the recurrence of maltreatment?
3. Did greater participation in the AFF program predict maltreatment recurrence?

Sample
- Crude administrative sample of 1,888 families under the investigation of Child Protective Services in Arizona.
- Families represented cases wherein an allegation of child maltreatment had been filed and/or a child had been placed in out of home care, pending the conclusion of investigation.
- Families had been referred to a statewide program, known as Arizona Families FIRST (AFF) in Recovery Counseling and Treatment (AFC), due to suspected parental substance abuse.
- AFF program delivered through a network of nine community-based agencies under contract with CPS and/or the state single agency (SOA) for substance abuse treatment services.

Data Sources
- All data used in this study were harvested from electronic administrative records.
- Client and family characteristics of the parents and families are gathered through standardized assessments that are conducted with each referred client at the time of program enrollment.
- Allegations and findings of child maltreatment are maintained within the CRDWS Data Base, operated and maintained by the Arizona Child Protective Services. These data include the type of maltreatment (e.g., sexual abuse, physical abuse, neglect), the date of the alleged maltreatment, the report allegation finding (substantiated or unsubstantiated) and the relative risk associated with the allegation (1.0 client scale). Additional information regarding repeat maltreatment incident, including the identity of the perpetrator; relationship to the child, and other information, was obtained but not utilized for these analyses.
- For the purposes of these analyses, information regarding all allegations and reports of child maltreatment for children with individuals who were referred to the AFF program during the period of July 1, 2004–June 30, 2005 were obtained.
- Maltreatment allegations and reports associated with these AFF families that occurred between the period of July 1, 2004 and March 30, 2010 were used for the analyses.

This research was approved by the Arizona State (University’s Institutional Review Board and classified as an expedited project). A HPM Business Associates agreement between the Arizona Department of Economic Security, Child Protective Services, and Arizona State University was established to ensure the security of relevant health protected information.

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