

THE NDACAN

# UPDATE

Volume 11, Fall 2000

Family Life Development Center, New York State College of Human Ecology, Cornell University

## First wave of data from the Consortium of Longitudinal Studies of Child Abuse and Neglect (LONGSCAN)

By Christine E. Cox, PhD

In 1993 the National Research Council issued a call for theory-based, longitudinal research to examine the antecedents and consequences of child maltreatment. In response to an initiative by the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN), the LONGSCAN (LONGitudinal Studies of Child Abuse and Neglect) consortium was formed from 1989 to 1991 to conduct a multi-site longitudinal investigation of the antecedents and consequences of maltreatment among young children identified as maltreated or at risk for maltreatment. The goal of the consortium is to provide scientific direction for policy, programs, and services related to child maltreatment by increasing our understanding of child, family, and community factors that: (1) increase risk for different forms of child maltreatment, and (2) exacerbate or ameliorate the harm caused by child maltreatment. The studies are being conducted in four urban sites (in the East, Midwest, Northwest, and Southwest) and one state-wide site in the South that includes urban, suburban, and rural communities. They are linked through a coordinating center (the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) and an agreement to share objectives, measures, data collection strategies, data management, and governance.

LONGSCAN initiated these parallel cohort studies of children identified as at risk or maltreated in the first years

of life with the intent to follow the children into adulthood. LONGSCAN's longitudinal cohort design begins with children at 4 years of age or younger and follows them at regularly scheduled intervals. Brief yearly contacts with the caregivers gather data about services received, life events, and child behavior problems. These annual contacts are punctuated by more extensive evaluations conducted, or planned to be conducted, at ages 4, 6, 8, 12, 14, 16, 18, and 20. Data collected from multiple informants is designed to measure outcomes as well as intervening factors that may influence the link between risk status and outcomes. The oldest children in LONGSCAN are now age 14 and the youngest are 5, with a total sample size of 1,435.

The LONGSCAN samples were chosen to represent varying levels of risk and exposure to maltreatment. At the most extreme level, the Southwest site focuses exclusively on children who, at a very young age, were removed from their homes and placed into foster care.

Three sites recruited children into LONGSCAN based on CPS referral status. In the Northwest site, all the children were reported to CPS at some time prior to age five. In the Midwest site, about two-thirds of the sample of mother-infant dyads were recruited from reported families, half receiving comprehensive services and half receiving only CPS intervention. The other one-third of the sample is non-reported neighborhood controls. The South sample was selected by matching non-reported to reported children on a 2:1 ratio; thus at the time of recruitment, one-third of this sample had been reported. Finally the East sample includes low-income children recruited from primary health-care clinics, independent of their involvement with CPS. Of course, regardless of initial maltreatment status, LONGSCAN also provides the opportunity for a prospective look at maltreatment, identifying new maltreatment or recurring maltreatment as it occurs during the lifespan.

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### NDACAN Funding Renewed!

**The National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect has entered into a five-year cooperative agreement with the Children's Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NDACAN will continue to provide low-cost datasets to the research community as well as expand its services to include a series of working papers and other publications, enhanced Web capabilities and improvements to the annual Summer Research Institute. We're looking forward to it!**

# Archive News

## NDACAN On-line Services Enhancements

The NDACAN Web site ([www.ndacan.cornell.edu](http://www.ndacan.cornell.edu)) now includes a search feature which allows users to locate a word or phrase in all of its pages. In addition, users can narrow the search to scan all the past postings of the Child Maltreatment Research list serve. Recently, the Archive has also made efforts to improve access to its site by people with disabilities by adding text alternatives to images and improving the general layout.

Please note that we have changed our e-mail address from

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Layout by Andrés Arroyo

[DataCAN@cornell.edu](mailto:DataCAN@cornell.edu) to NDACAN@cornell.edu. The former address will still work indefinitely but all future publications and correspondence will now use the new one.

## CMR-L List Serve Update and Information

NDACAN created the Child Maltreatment Research list serve (CMRL) was created in 1993 to facilitate information exchange and networking among researchers in the field of child abuse and neglect. It currently has over 1000 subscribers all over the world and is carefully moderated for appropriate content.

The scope of the discussion group includes all areas of child maltreatment research (e.g., epidemiology, etiology, prevention, consequences, intervention, and treatment) and the full range of research issues (e.g., measurement, instrumentation, statistical analysis, ethics). The list is not open to discussions of program or clinical issues except as they relate to research. There is no fee for joining or using the Child Maltreatment Research list. To subscribe, send an e-mail message from the address that will receive the postings to [listproc@cornell.edu](mailto:listproc@cornell.edu) containing only the following line:

subscribe Child-Maltreatment-Research-L Fname Lname

Fname and Lname should be replaced with your first and last names. To unsubscribe from the list, send an e-mail message from the address to be removed to [listproc@cornell.edu](mailto:listproc@cornell.edu) containing only the following line:

unsubscribe Child-Maltreatment-Research-L

All postings to the CMR-L mailing list since its inception are available for viewing on our Web site: [www.ndacan.cornell.edu](http://www.ndacan.cornell.edu).

The Archive conducted its second survey of CMRL users to learn who they are, assess their satisfaction with the service, and to look at the quantity and nature of off-list communication that the list precipitates. We expect to publish the the results of our survey analysis in a journal related to on-line behavior. For preliminary information please see the article entitled *A Picture of the Child Maltreatment Research List Subscriber* on page 5.

## Adoption and Foster Care (AFCARS) Data Available for Multiple Years

The Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) is an ongoing federally-mandated data collection effort administered by the Children's Bureau. States are required to submit child-level information regarding adopted children and children in foster care. AFCARS is designed to address policy development and program management issues at the state and federal levels, and it also useful for secondary analysis of the foster care and adoption populations.

An advantage of AFCARS over previous efforts is its use of uniform definitions, methods, and standards. A broad range of information is collected including data on the characteristics of adoptive and foster care children and their parents (biological parents, adoptive parents, and foster care parents); the status of the foster care population (i.e., number of children in care, type of placement, length of placement, availability for adoption, and goals for ending or continuing care); and the extent and nature of assistance provided by federal, state, and local adoption and foster care programs.

Data have been collected for the AFCARS since 1995, and the quality of the data has improved each year. While AFCARS is federally mandated, penalties for non-compliance were not imposed for the first three years of the program, but beginning with the 1998 data submission, financial penalties could be imposed if a state did not submit data or submitted data that failed to meet compliance standards. As a result, state participation in 1998 reached the highest levels to that date. For 1998, in addition to D.C. and Puerto Rico, all states were included in the adoption file and 41 states were included in the foster care file.

NDACAN currently distributes the AFCARS annual files for all the years from 1995 to 1998, and data for 1999 should be available in the near future. Please contact Elliott Smith at NDACAN if you would like further information.

## First wave of data from the Consortium of Longitudinal Studies of Child Abuse and Neglect (LONGSCAN)

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The 5 cohort studies have used an ecological-developmental model to guide measurement selection and research questions. According to this model, a child develops within multiple, nested social systems beginning with direct interaction with the primary caregiver and family and extending through indirect influence from cultural traditions (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1993). Based on this theory children's responses to maltreatment and intervention are expected to vary by age, developmental level, and the context of the maltreatment. Early interviews examined caregiver mental health and involvement in the children's lives along with other measures of family functioning, social support, stress, and family socioeconomic level. Child data collected includes developmental status, cognitive ability, social functioning, perceived competence, and witnessed violence. Children's own reports are increasingly relied upon as the children age. At age 12, data are collected directly from the child about physical, psychological and sexual abuse and witnessed violence, emotional support, peer and parental relationships, school orientation and performance, and parent/ family relationships and involvement. At age 16 the study focus will change to attitudes about adult roles, dating, and parenting. At age 20 the focus will be on transition to adult work, mating, and parenting.

The findings of LONGSCAN will provide a scientific basis for policy-making, program planning, and targeting service delivery by increasing our understanding of the following:

- the child, family, and community factors which increase the risk for maltreatment in its different forms
- the differential consequences of maltreatment, depending upon its timing, duration, severity, and nature, and upon the child's age and cultural environment
- the child, family, and community factors (e.g., chronic exposure to violence, parental substance abuse) that increase the harm caused by different forms of maltreatment

- the factors that increase the probability of positive child outcomes despite maltreatment and other adverse life circumstances
- the strengths and weaknesses of various societal interventions such as child welfare programs, foster care, mental health services, parenting classes, etc. Some of the sites are involved in intervention research and evaluation of services, expediting the integration of research findings into policy and practice.

**Early findings from the LONGSCAN study.** Some of the topics on which LONGSCAN has published research include the risk to children posed by domestic violence; the significance of fathers and father-figures in the lives of maltreated and at-risk children; system response in identifying children most at risk; risk and protective factors for young at-risk children; and the impact of early intervention. Findings on the impact of social capital on the development of young at-risk children have provided empirical support for efforts to enhance supportive interpersonal relationships of at-risk children and their families within the larger community through, for example, neighborhood outreach and church affiliation. The preliminary conclusions of our work on domestic violence and witnessed violence are that these two types of experiences appear to have an impact fully equal to the impact of maltreatment. Analyses of children who have experienced foster care suggest that children placed in kinship care had fewer problems than those placed in non-relative foster care, likely due to a selection bias in placement, and continued to have significantly fewer problems than those in non-relative care. Children reunified with their biological families had fewer problems than those who remained in foster care; however, their developmental status deteriorated over time as a result of exposure to adverse family environments. Findings on father involvement have demonstrated that the presence of a father figure contributes significantly to children's cognitive development and sense of competence and social ac-

ceptance, and that children who perceived greater father support had a stronger sense of competence and social competence and fewer depressive symptoms.

The first wave of the data archived with NDACAN includes data collected at the Age 4 interview as well as data collected prior to age 4 from two of the sites. Measures included from the caregiver's report include the Adult Adolescent Parenting Inventory; measures of the quality of the caregiver's relationship with her spouse or partner and family functioning; measures of depression, neurotic and psychosomatic symptoms, physical health, caregiver history of loss, separation, and victimization, recent positive and negative life events, social support and services utilization. Measures pertaining to the child include the Batelle Developmental Screening Inventory, Child Behavior Checklist, other measures of health behavior and development, cognitive and psychological functioning, daycare experiences, and life events. Maltreatment reports occurring up to the Age 4 interview are also included. The availability of these data for public use will benefit a wide range of researchers interested in child development and family processes and facilitate the growth in the body of knowledge for policy and practice of the family contexts underlying the development of children at risk.

To access a selected bibliography of LONGSCAN publications, please visit [www.ndacan.cornell.edu/Documentation/87/Refs.html](http://www.ndacan.cornell.edu/Documentation/87/Refs.html).

*Christine Cox is Research Assistant Professor of Social Medicine at the University of North Carolina and an investigator at the LONGSCAN coordinating center.*



# 2000 Summer Research Institute Report

The annual National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect Summer Research Institute (SRI) provides a small group of scholars the opportunity to spend a week on the Cornell campus working on secondary analysis of child welfare datasets. Away from routine office work and day-to-day distractions, participants can efficiently delve into a dataset from the Archive to answer the research questions they have formulated. The Institute aims to facilitate completion and publication of a medium-term secondary analysis project. To that end the Archive provides significant computer time, knowledgeable consultants, and a group of colleagues with whom to exchange ideas and share experience.

This year, twelve individuals attended the institute. The group represented diverse geographic locations and research interests. This year's group consisted mainly of professors and graduate students in the fields of psychology and social work. The fields of policy

analysis and pediatrics were also represented.

After their morning computer sessions, SRI researchers attended lectures by Cornell faculty members Jim Garbarino, John Eckenrode, and Ed Frongillo and staff member Karen Grace-Martin. Presentations covered topics ranging from the secret lives of violent boys to methods for handling missing data. In response to past participant feedback, this year's SRI also included a data analysis workshop: a review of logistic regression methods.

During the computing sessions throughout the week, participants had the opportunity to receive individual consulting with the Archive staff and volunteers from the Cornell Office of Statistical Consulting and the Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research. Jeff Johnson of Walter R. McDonald & Associates, Inc. reprised his role from last year as a special consultant for those working with the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data

System 1995-1997 (NDACAN Dataset #75).

Outside the computer lab, participants explored restaurants and shopping in Collegetown and downtown Ithaca. One evening a group of participants and Archive staff went on a hike at Taughannock Falls State Park and others saw a night view of Cayuga Lake from nearby Ithaca College. Participants of this year's Institute found their week at Cornell both productive and fun and we look forward to hosting another SRI in 2001.

## Call for Datasets

***The Archive is continually looking for datasets which would be valuable additions to its holdings. Criteria for selection are based on the dataset's methodological rigor, scope, relevance and technical quality. If you have data or know of data which would be particularly beneficial to other child maltreatment researchers, please contact us.***

## Forthcoming Datasets Available from NDACAN

### **Decision-making in Child Protective Services: A Study of Effectiveness, 1998.**

**Diana English et al.**

#### **NDACAN Dataset #83**

The Department of Social and Health Services of the State of Washington examined the characteristics of child protective services (CPS) referrals that were more likely to be substantiated compared to referrals classified as inconclusive or unsubstantiated. The objectives of this study were to: (1) identify the factors that influence the decision not to substantiate a CPS referral; (2) identify the characteristics of CPS referrals that are more likely to be unsubstantiated or inconclusive compared to those that will be substantiated; and (3) determine if families reported to CPS but not unsubstantiated differ significantly in their potential for abuse, subsequent re-referral, and perceptions of the impact of CPS investigations from families reported and found indicated or unsubstantiated. Data for this study were extracted from a larger dataset downloaded from the Washington State case management information system (CAMIS). NDACAN will distribute one data file for this study containing 12,978 cases.

### **Parenting Among Women Sexually Abused in Childhood, 1998.**

**Mary I. Benedict**

#### **NDACAN Dataset #85**

This project is a follow-up study to determine the long-term impact of childhood sexual abuse on parenting behaviors in an ethnically and culturally diverse sample of 350 women. The women were first interviewed when pregnant with their first child. Almost 35 percent reported sexual abuse before age 18, and these women reported significantly more depressive symptoms during their pregnancy. The first objective of the follow-up study is to determine the direct and indirect impact of the sexual abuse on maternal behavior. The second objective is to determine whether differing circumstances of the abuse experience influence parenting outcomes differently. The data will be distributed as one data file containing 265 cases and 574 variables.

### **Longitudinal Studies of Child Abuse and Neglect (LONGSCAN)- Wave I Baseline Data.**

**NDACAN Dataset #87**

**Coordinating Center, Principal Investigator: Desmond Runyan, MD, DrPH**

**Co-Principal Investigator: Wanda**

### **Hunter, MPH**

The Consortium of Longitudinal Studies in Child Abuse and Neglect (LONGSCAN) brings together five long-term studies of child maltreatment that utilize common procedures and instrumentation. Each of the sites is conducting a separate and unique research project on the etiology and impact of child maltreatment. While each project can stand alone on its own merits, the use of common assessment measures, similar data collection methods and schedules, and pooled analyses make LONGSCAN a collaborative effort that is truly greater than the sum of its parts. Built into the LONGSCAN design is also the ability to replicate and extend findings across variety of ethnic, social and economic subgroups. Each site is following a sample of children who were identified in the first years of life as being maltreated or at high risk for maltreatment. The goal of LONGSCAN is to follow these children and their families until the children themselves become young adults. Comprehensive assessments of children, their parents, and their teachers are scheduled to occur at child ages 4, 6, 8, 12, 16, and 20.

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# A Picture of the Child Maltreatment Research List Subscriber

Last October, the NDACAN staff distributed a Web-based survey to the over 1,000 subscribers to the Child Maltreatment Research e-mail list serve. After only a moderate amount of prodding and a thankfully small number of technical glitches, a respectable 30% of the list responded to the survey.

The intent of the survey was three-fold: to gather demographic and career-related information about subscribers, to measure their involvement in research-related activities, and to assess subscribers' experience with the list, including how they found it and how satisfied they are. Some highlights from the survey are presented below:

## Demographic and Career-Related Info

- 65% are women. The mean age is 43 years (ranging from 23 to 78).
- 19% are from countries other than the United States. Of those in the U.S., there are subscribers from 45 states and

the District of Columbia.

- 85% have either a master's or doctoral degree (42% Masters, 43% Doctorate).
- 46% work primarily at a university or college. 13% work in a private not-for-profit setting, and 10% work at state government agencies.
- On average, respondents have been in the child maltreatment field for 11 years (0 to 40).

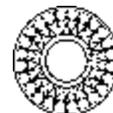
## Involvement in Research

- Respondents spend 44% of their professional time on research activities.
- 64% have carried out a research project in the last 3 years. Of these, 86% report that these projects were related to child maltreatment.
- In terms of scholarly activity, 63% have given a paper presentation, 41% have written a magazine article, 38% have written a journal article, 21% have written a book chapter, 22% have written a book, 32% have submitted a research grant proposal, and 21% have

received a research grant.

## Experience with the Child Maltreatment Research List serve

- 36% of respondents learned about the list from a colleague, while 22% learned about it either from the NDACAN Web site or an NDACAN mailing. An additional 27% found it through another internet resource.
- On average, respondents have been subscribed to the list for 2 years .
- 61% subscribe to other e-mail list serves.
- 94% of the respondents were either somewhat or very satisfied with the list. 52% were very satisfied.
- 75% of respondents report that the list has benefited their work.
- For 56% of respondents, their subscription to the list has led to communication with other subscribers through means other than the list.



## Forthcoming Datasets Available from NDACAN

*continued from page 4*

The data that will be released by the Archive represent the baseline data collected on children ages 0 to 4. Subsequent data will be released as the studies progress.

### National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS), Detailed Case Data Component, 1998. Children's Bureau

The National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) is a voluntary national data collection and analysis system created in response to the requirements of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. The NCANDS consists of two parts: the Summary Data Component (SDC), a compilation of key aggregate child abuse and neglect statistics from all States, including data on reports, investigations, victims, and perpetrators; and the Detailed Case Data component (DCDC), a compilation of automated case-level data, facilitating analysis of the relationships among key variables related to child abuse and neglect. The

data will consist of two files for each participating state. One file contains 14 variables and includes characteristics of all children included in a report of alleged maltreatment. Characteristics of the report (such as the report source and report disposition) are included in this file. The second file for each state contains 62 variables but is limited to

children who were identified as victims. In addition to basic information concerning the report and the child, this file also contains information concerning the type of maltreatment, the support services provided to the family, and special problems that were identified for the child, caretaker, or family.

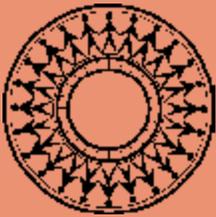
## 2001 Summer Research Institute

**The next NDACAN Summer Research Institute has been scheduled for May 29 - June 3, 2001. Twelve applicants will be selected on a competitive basis and participants generally represent a wide variety of disciplines (e.g., psychology, medicine, epidemiology, social work). Applications for the 2001 Summer Research Institute will be available in October 2000. To receive the application and information about scholarship possibilities, please visit our Web site ([www.ndacan.cornell.edu](http://www.ndacan.cornell.edu)) or e-mail your request to [NDACAN@cornell.edu](mailto:NDACAN@cornell.edu) in October 2000.**

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Applications will be available in early October.**



***The mission of the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN) is to facilitate the secondary analysis of research data relevant to the study of child abuse and neglect. By making data available to a larger number of researchers, NDACAN seeks to provide a relatively inexpensive and scientifically productive means for researchers to explore important issues in the child maltreatment field.***

## **Other Resources for Child Abuse and Neglect Researchers**

### **Child Maltreatment 1998: Reports from the States to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System**

The National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) is an information collection system that gathers and analyzes annual State statistics on abused and neglected children. These data are made available to policy makers, child welfare practitioners, researchers, and concerned citizens. It is hoped that making these data available will inform policy and practice and assist in improving policies, programs and services aimed at ensuring the safety and well-being of children. **This publication is available from the Clearinghouse as described below.**

### **The National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information**

The Clearinghouse is a service of the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect and serves as a national resource for professionals seeking information on the prevention, identifica-

tion, and treatment of child abuse and neglect. The Clearinghouse can be contacted as follows:

National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information,  
P.O. Box 1182, Washington, DC 20013  
Phone: 1-800-FYI-3366  
E-Mail: nccanch@calib.com  
Web site: www.calib.com/nccanch

### **The Child Abuse Prevention Network**

The Child Abuse Prevention Network (<http://child-abuse.com>) is an online resource center for professionals in the field of child abuse and neglect. The Network provides tools to support the identification, investigation, treatment, adjudication, and prevention of child abuse and neglect.

### **National Resource Center for Information Technology in Child Welfare**

The mission of NRC-ITCW is to assist State, local and tribal child welfare agencies and the courts in improving outcomes for children and families through

the use of information technology. This on-line resource assists front line workers, supervisors and administrators in child welfare, as well as judges and court administrative personnel, in using technology and information to inform policy and practice in child welfare. NRC-ITCW also supports states and courts in meeting the requirements of the Adoption and Safe Families Act and other federal mandates. Web site: [www.nrcitcw.org](http://www.nrcitcw.org).

### **National Data Analysis System (NDAS)**

The Child Welfare League of America, in cooperation with the state child welfare agencies, presents the nation's first comprehensive, interactive child welfare database: the National Data Analysis System (NDAS). The NDAS harnesses technology to promote effective integration of research, policy, and practice. The NDAS puts child welfare statistics at the fingertips of Internet users, creating customized tables and graphs and providing information and links necessary to understand the data. Web site: <http://ndas.cwla.org>.