

# Risks of Foster Care Re-Entry for Children in Relative & Non-Relative Foster Homes

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# Children in Kinship Foster Care

- In 2003, 121,030 children were placed in kinship foster homes
  - 23% of foster care population
- Wide Acceptance & Use of Kinship Placements
  - Attention to comparative outcomes of children in kinship & non-kinship foster care,  
Especially in the area of family permanence



# Permanency Outcomes of Kin Children

- Disadvantages of Kinship Foster Homes
  - Legal permanence:  
Reunification & adoption
  - Length of stay in care
- Advantages of Kinship Foster Homes
  - Placement stability
  - Foster care re-entry



# Limitations of Prior Research

- Heavily relied on statistical regression model to handle the problem of selection bias
  - Limitations of adjusting for pre-existing group differences and selection biases
  - Grogan-Kaylor (2001)'s study:  
Provided evidence of the limitations of standard regression methods

# Purpose of Study

- Examine the permanency outcomes of children in relative foster homes in comparison with children in non-relative foster homes in the contexts of different state child welfare systems
  - Focus on the outcome of **foster care re-entry**
  - **Address the problem of selection bias** that has been prevalent in previous literature.
- Research Question:
  - **Are children in relative foster homes no less likely to re-enter out-of-home care after their discharge than children in non- relative foster homes?**
  - **Are the effects of placement type the same across the states?**



# Research Data

- Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting Systems (AFCARS)
  - AFCARS data for 6 states:  
**AZ, CT, IL, MO, OH, & TN**
  - AFCARS 6-month submissions **from March 2000 to September 2005**
  - Observational period of the study:  
**From October 1, 1999 to September 30, 2005**

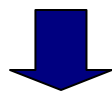


# Sampling Procedure

Children who entered out-of-home care for the first time between October 1, 1999 and September 30, 2004



Children who have ever experienced discharge into reunification with parents before the end of the observational period



Children who have their last-reported placement setting at either relative or non- relative foster homes

# Method of Analysis

- Propensity Score Matching (PSM)
  - Known to minimize selection biases, allowing for more accurate comparison of groups in their outcomes
  - Matches subjects on their conditional probability of group membership (a propensity score)
    - A propensity score: a single scalar variable that is calculated from observed covariates or conditioning variables



# Method of Analysis

- Propensity Score Matching in the Study
  - Was used to control for different characteristics of relative and non-relative foster homes
  - Applied logistic regression model to predict the likelihood that a child would be placed in a relative foster home
  - Created matched samples of kin & non-kin children

# Method of Analysis

- Variables included in Logistic Regression Model
  - Child's age at discharge, gender, race, and disability
  - Reason for removal
  - Number of previous placement settings experienced
  - Length of time in care prior to discharge
  - Year of exit
  - County of service provision (largest vs. the others)
  - Primary caregiver's (parent's) age and marital status
  - Title IV-E eligibility
  - Primary foster caregiver's age and marital status
  - Match of child and primary foster caregiver's race

# Method of Analysis

- Bivariate Analysis
  - To investigate the outcome of foster care re-entry for children in relative foster homes in comparison with children in non-relative foster homes
- Survival Analysis
  - To analyze the outcome of foster care re-entry for children in relative and non-relative foster homes, modeling time to re-entry

# Method of Analysis

## - Survival Analysis

### Model I

- Type of Placement (Kin)
- State
- Interaction of Kin & State



### Model II

- Monthly Foster Care Payment (\$)
- Interaction of Kin & \$



### Model III

- Covariates Included in Logistic Regression Model

# Findings: PSM



- Sample Size by State

	Unmatched Kin	Unmatched Non-Kin	Matched Kin	Matched Non-Kin
AZ	1,582	1,672	883	883
CT	856	2,412	698	698
IL	2,655	2,724	1,080	1,080
MO	2,331	2,235	1,366	1,366
OH	6,478	10,726	4,050	4,050
TN	727	2,150	674	674

# Findings: PSM



- Characteristics of Relative & Non-Relative Foster Homes
  - Before matching
    - Significant differences
    - No consistent trend among states
  - After matching
    - Complete matching: AZ, CT, IL, TN
    - Incomplete matching: MO, OH



# Findings: Bivariate Analysis

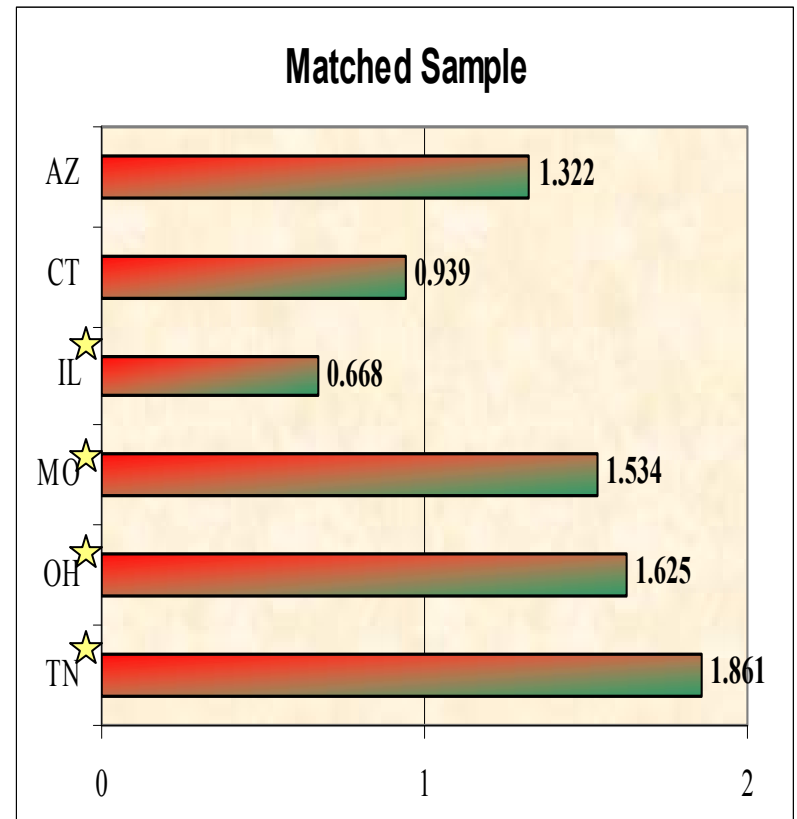
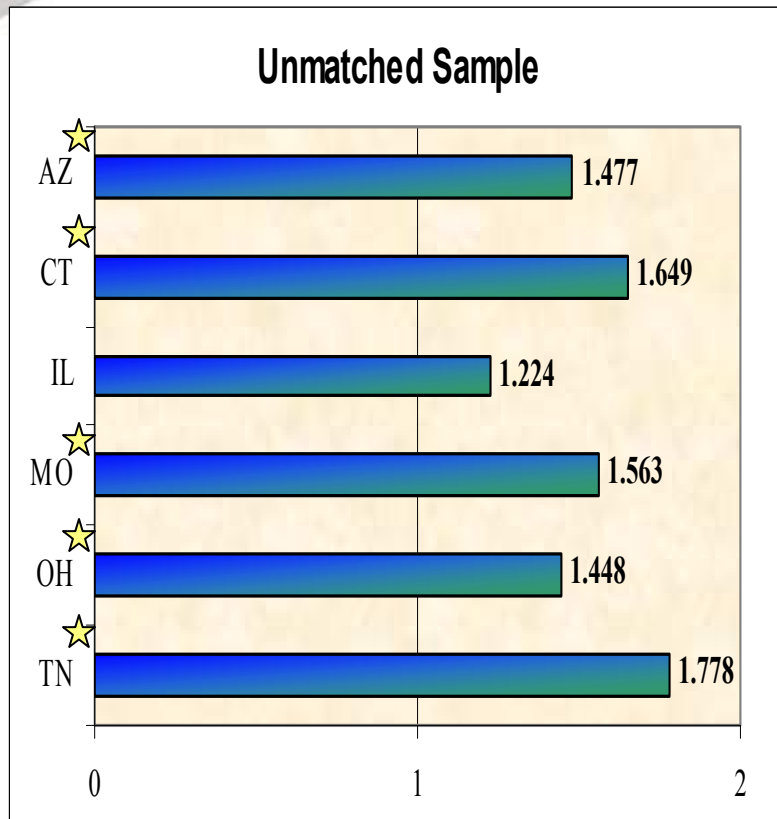
- Rates of Foster Care Re-entry for Kin and Non-kin Children

	Unmatched Kin	Unmatched Non-Kin	Matched Kin	Matched Non-Kin
AZ	19.09	28.41	21.74	24.69
CT	15.77	22.14	16.62	17.34
IL	15.52	20.04	19.81	16.39
MO	14.41	19.51	16.25	18.67
OH	20.07	26.82	20.59	25.88
TN	15.82	22.79	16.47	22.11

 p<0.001     p<0.05

# Findings: Survival Analysis

- Likelihood of Re-entering Out-of-Home Care





# Implications

- Wide Variations Among States
  - Different child welfare policies & practices regime of each state may have a greater impact on permanency outcomes of children in care
    - Future study should examine such effects of child welfare policy and practice
  - Advantages of kinship placements in the outcome of foster care re-entry cannot be generalized
    - Future study should be conducted at a national level or compare the findings among states



# Implications

- Contradictory Findings between Analysis of Unmatched and Matched Samples
  - Limitations of standard regression model in investigating causal relationship
    - Future study should identify causal factors that account child welfare outcomes, which are independent from pre-existing group differences



**Thank You!!!  
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Contact Information

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