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

Saijun Zhang, Ph.D., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Hui Huang, Ph.D., Florida International University Meirong Liu, Ph.D., Howard University

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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:
 - 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

500 studies included in the initial review

7 qualifying studies were identified

Studies Included in the Meta-Analysis: Summary of Examined Interventions and Outcomes						
Study	Intervention	Child Welfare Outcome	Other Outcome(s)			

Reunification

Reunification

Reunification

Reunification

Re-entry to Out of Home Care

Recurrence of Maltreatment

Permanency: Parental Custody,

Termination of Parental Rights,

Kinship Caregiver Placement

Recurrence of maltreatment

Access to Substance Use

Family Functioning

Maternal Substance Use

Treatment

Barth (2006)

Marsh (2006)

Ryan

(2006)

Brook

(2007)

Ryan

(2008)

Dakof

(2009)

Choi

(2012)

Substance Use Treatment

Integrated Service Model

Intensive Case Management

Intensive Case Management

Engaging Moms Program:

Substance Use Treatment

Multidimensional Family Therapy

(implemented in a Family Drug

Comprehensive Service Delivery

Recovery Coach:

Recovery Coach:

Court program)

(completion)

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

Intervention Group:

Comparison Group:

12-91% with Positive Outcomes

219

413

986

60

670

43

485

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

Barth (2006)

Marsh (2006)

Brook (2007)

Dakof (2009)

Ryan

Ryan

Choi

(2012)

(2008)

(2006)

7-79% with Positive Outcomes

219

311

431

79

261

37

373

81%

7%

7%

30%

79%

41%

13%

Total # of Participants in Intervention (N=2.876)	Percentage with Positive Outcomes	Total in Comparison Group (N=1,711)	Percentage with Positive Outcomes

91%

16%

12%

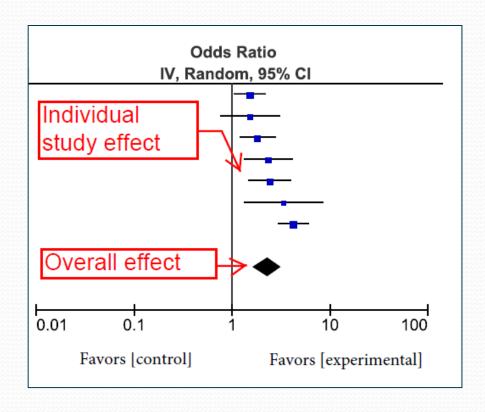
40%

85%

70%

38%

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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