“MISSING” DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS IN WELFARE CASELOADS:
THE DISCREPANCY BETWEEN SURVEY AND ADMINISTRATIVE DISCLOSURE RATES

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Domestic Violence Among TANF Recipients

- Evidence that domestic violence is a common barrier to self-sufficiency for welfare recipients
- Very few women have disclosed domestic violence to welfare caseworkers
- Explanations for this discrepancy include:
  - Willingness on part of victims
  - Screening methods of caseworkers
- No research on subgroup analyses or characteristics of victims based on decisions to disclose or not
Research Purposes

- To compare demographic characteristics and reported barriers between women who disclosed domestic violence to survey researchers versus those who also confided in their caseworker

- To decipher whom welfare caseworkers are reaching, and assist in identifying possible sub-groups of “missing” victims

- To inform current policy surrounding domestic violence screening in welfare offices
Methods: Sample

- Random sample of single adults with children who received a TANF grant in Maryland in June 2002 (n=1046)
- Limited to women who responded to questions regarding domestic violence within a telephone survey (n=787)
- Divided into groups based on disclosure
Methods: Data Sources

- **Maryland State Administrative Systems**
  - Client Information System (1993-present)
  - Maryland Unemployment Insurance System

- **Maryland TANF Caseload Survey**
  - Computer-Assisted Telephone Survey
  - Conducted by MPR (August to October 2002)
  - Sponsored by ASPE
Methods: Design

- Data were weighted to represent Maryland’s current TANF caseload:
  - 1.31 for Baltimore City cases
  - 0.70 for Non-Baltimore City cases
- Chi-square and ANOVA tests were used to determine differences among the groups
Prevalence of Domestic Violence

- 18.8% (n=148) disclosed recent physical domestic violence in the survey
  - Evaluated 8 of 16 female-directed questions concerning intimate partner violence within the past year (CTS)

- 1.7% (n=13) were marked as recent domestic violence victims in the administrative data
  - Residence in DV shelter in the past 12 months, "yes" in DV indicator field, and/or exemptions to time limit, work, or child support requirements
Prevalence of Domestic Violence

Survey Disclosers Only 18.1% (n=142)
Survey & Admin Disclosers 0.7% (n=6)
Admin Disclosers Only 0.9% (n=7)
No Domestic Violence 80.3% (n=632)
Summary of Findings

- Domestic violence victims who are marked in the automated system differ from those who only disclosed to survey researchers
- Rather than one particular profile or typical hard-to-identify victim, sub-groups of “missing” victims exist
- Demographic differences were the most stark
- No significant differences were found in employment or welfare history
- Survey disclosers reported fewer barriers than those who were administratively marked
Demographic Differences: Age**

Note: *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
Demographic Differences: Race***

Survey Disclosers
- African-American: 82.8%
- Caucasian: 16.7%

Admin & Survey
- African-American: 50.0%
- Caucasian: 50.0%

Admin Only
- African-American: 49.3%
- Caucasian: 40.6%

No Domestic Violence
- African-American: 88.3%
- Caucasian: 11.1%

Note: *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
Other Demographic Differences

% Never Married

Survey Disclosers: 70.9%
Admin & Survey: 50.0%
Admin Only: 59.4%
No DV: 71.5%

% Without High School Education

Survey Disclosers: 43.8%
Admin & Survey: 12.5%
Admin Only: 30.4%
No DV: 42.0%

Note: *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
Employment and Welfare History

Months of TANF Receipt in the Past Five Years

% Ever Employed

Note: *p<.05, **p.01, ***p.001
Barriers: Personal and Family***/

Personal and Family Barriers include:
- Health problems (personal or as a caretaker)
- Mental health problem
- Drug or alcohol dependence
- Criminal record
- Difficulty with English language

Note: *p<.05, **p.01, ***p.001
Barriers: Logistical and Situational***

Logistical and Situational Barriers include:

- Transportation problems
- Child Care Problems
- Unstable Housing
- Discrimination
- Bad Neighborhood Conditions

Note: *p<.05, **p.01, ***p.001
Barriers: Human Capital

Human Capital Barriers include:
- Lack of High School diploma
- No work experience
- Performed fewer than 4 job skills

Note: *p<.05, **p.01, ***p.001
Conclusions

- Screening practices have differing effects on different types of women
- Women who are missing from administrative data report fewer personal, family, and logistical barriers to employment
- Current frontline practices may not be adequate in screening, identifying, or recording domestic violence among:
  - African American women
  - Younger women
  - Perhaps never-married and less educated women
Policy Implications

- Culturally-sensitive screening
- Further research on race & possibility of jurisdictional differences
- Continuation of Family Violence Option
For further information on this study, please send an e-mail to:

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