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**Profiles of Cumulative Risk Predicting Child Welfare System Involvement**

Despite the fact that 2013 Institute of Medicine report calls for research investigating etiology, and prevention of child maltreatment, the research recommendations do not include the word “parent” or “caregiver” as a focus of research. According to the federal definition of child maltreatment in US policy, *there is no maltreatment without a parent acting as either an agent of commission (abuse) or omission (neglect).* More recent research in pediatrics and developmental psychology points toward accumulating risks as the key to understanding the etiology of maltreatment, especially as many of these risks are interrelated. However, there is little, if any, work that has attempted to propose theories of etiology by analyzing the ways that risks accumulate and organize in the lives of parents.

Further complicating the issue is that child welfare system involvement is related to, but not perfectly overlapping with, child maltreatment. In particular, research has been concerned with the idea that children are removed from their families for non-maltreatment-related reasons, most notably parental substance abuse and poverty.

This paper utilizes latent profile analysis in the study of the Longitudinal Studies of Child Abuse and Neglect (LONGSCAN) to generate a taxonomy of cumulative risk in parents’ lives. Identified profiles of risk indicate that the relationship between child maltreatment, child protection response, and child well-being is far more complicated than currently assumed, with even less overlap between parenting challenges and child protection response than is typically assumed. Implications for prevention strategies will be discussed.

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