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Major findings from the Canadian incidence study of reported child abuse and neglect[☆]

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Abstract

Objective: To present key findings from the Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Maltreatment (CIS) in sufficient detail to provide a basis for international comparisons in terms of forms and severity of maltreatment and the age and sex of victims.

Method: A survey conducted in a random sample of 51 child welfare service areas across Canada tracked child maltreatment investigations conducted during the months of October to December 1998, produced a national sample of 7,672 child maltreatment investigations. Information was collected directly from investigating workers on child and family background, perpetrator characteristics, severity and types of maltreatment and service and court outcomes of investigations.

Results: Forty-five percent of investigations were substantiated and in a further 22% of investigations maltreatment remained suspected. Primary reasons for investigation were physical abuse (31%), sexual abuse (11%), neglect (40%), and emotional maltreatment (19%). A larger proportion of physical abuse cases are isolated incidents involving older children and are more likely to lead to injuries. Sexual abuse, neglect and emotional maltreatment involve more chronic situations with children showing signs of emotional harm. Rates of investigated and substantiated maltreatment are lower in Canada compared to the United States, but are higher than rates reported in Australia.

Conclusions: The CIS provides much needed information for developing a better understanding of the profile and needs of children and families investigated by child welfare authorities in Canada. The study also serves as a point from which international comparisons can be made.

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Keywords: Child abuse; Child sexual abuse; Child neglect; Child maltreatment; Canada; Survey methodology

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Introduction

There currently is no source of comprehensive Canada-wide statistics on children and families investigated because of suspected child abuse and neglect. As a result, the major sources of information for policy setting and service planning have been either tragic incidents reported in the media or trend data reported from other jurisdictions, in particular the United States. The Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (CIS) is the first Canadian study designed to examine the scope and characteristics of reported child abuse and neglect across Canada and to monitor the short-term outcomes of these investigations, including substantiation, placement, child welfare court and criminal charges (Trocmé et al., 2001a). This paper briefly describes the structure of child welfare services in Canada, summarizes the study methodology, presents key findings and considers these in comparison to child protection investigation statistics in the United States and Australia.

Background

Child welfare legislation and services in Canada are organized at the provincial and territorial levels. Child welfare is a mandated service, directed by provincial and territorial child welfare statutes. While all child welfare systems share certain basic characteristics organized around investigating reports of suspected maltreatment, providing various types of counseling and supervision, and looking after children in out-of-home care, there is considerable variation in the organization of these service delivery systems. Some provinces and territories operate under a centralized, government-run child welfare system; others have opted for decentralized models run by private mandated agencies. For aboriginal people in Canada, the organization of child welfare services falls under provincial/territorial statutes and regulations, although funding for on-reserve services is provided by the federal government. In recognition of the importance of involving aboriginal communities in providing such services, provincial and territorial governments are increasingly developing fully mandated aboriginal agencies.

Child welfare statutes vary considerably across Canada. Some jurisdictions limit their investigation mandates to children under 16, while others extend their investigations to youth under 19. Provincial and territorial statutes also vary in terms of the specific forms of maltreatment covered, procedures for investigation, grounds for removal, and timelines for determining permanent wardship. There are also significant differences in the way each jurisdiction collects and compiles child welfare statistics. In particular, the units of analysis used for counting cases (incidents, children, or families), the forms of maltreatment documented (physical and sexual abuse only in some jurisdictions, all forms of abuse and neglect in others), and the level of screening and substantiation reported (whether screened-out non-investigated cases and unfounded cases are included in reported statistics) can vary. Despite efforts to make provincial and territorial child welfare statistics more accessible, Canada-wide estimates of the rate of investigated child maltreatment cannot be derived from current information systems because of these differences (Federal Provincial Working Group on Child and Family Services Information, 1994, 1998).

The only Canada-wide child maltreatment study that has been conducted to date examined the self-reported childhood prevalence of sexual abuse in nationally representative sample

of adult men and women (Government of Canada, 1984). Several province-wide population prevalence studies have been conducted, including the Ontario Health Survey which examined childhood prevalence of physical and sexual abuse (MacMillan et al., 1997), and a recent Institut de la statistique du Québec study which examined the annual prevalence of physically abusive parenting practices as reported by a Quebec-wide sample of mothers (Clément, Bouchard, Jetté, & Laferrière, 2000). While these studies provide critical information about prevalence and correlates of child physical and sexual abuse, they do not include information on cases that are reported to child welfare authorities, and do not cover neglect or emotional maltreatment. The only other Canadian source of data on child abuse investigations is the incident-based crime statistics collected annually by the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1998). As of 1997, the Uniform Crime Report II (UCRII) survey was being completed by 179 police agencies in 6 provinces, representing 48% of the national volume of reported crime. While the number of police agencies reporting to the UCRII is increasing, the current UCRII sample is not nationally representative.

A number of studies have made use of provincially or municipally collected child welfare administrative statistics to examine trends and correlates of investigated physical or sexual abuse (Chamberland, Bouchard, & Beaudry, 1986; Mayer, 1995; Tourigny & Bouchard, 1994; Wright, Boucher, Frappier, Lebeau, & Sabourin, 1997). The 1993 Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (OIS) is the only province-wide study to examine the full range of forms of maltreatment investigated by child welfare authorities and is a precursor of the present study (Trocmé, McPhee, & Tam, 1995).

Methodology

Sample and procedure

Using an approach adapted from the 1993 Ontario Incidence Study (Trocmé et al., 1995) and from the CPS portion of the United States National Incidence Study (Sedlak & Broadhurst, 1996), the CIS collected information directly from child welfare workers about children and their families investigated because of reported child maltreatment. A multi-stage sampling design was used, first to select a representative sample of 51 child welfare service areas across Canada, and then to track child maltreatment investigations conducted in the selected sites during the months of October to December 1998, yielding a final sample of 7,672 investigations involving children under the age of 16. Excluded from the sample were: (1) incidents that were not reported to child welfare authorities, (2) reported cases that were screened out by child welfare services before being fully investigated, (3) new reports on cases already open by child welfare services, and (4) cases that were only investigated by the police. Children investigated for maltreatment on more than one occasion during a year were counted as separate investigations; thus, the unit of analysis is the child maltreatment investigation as opposed to the investigated child (see Trocmé et al., 2001a, 2001b for a discussion of case duplication in the CIS).

A significant challenge for the study was to overcome the variations in definitions of maltreatment used by different jurisdictions. The CIS uses a common classification system across

all jurisdictions that includes 22 forms of maltreatment. This classification reflects a fairly broad definition of child maltreatment, and includes several forms of maltreatment that are not specifically included in some provincial and territorial child welfare statutes (e.g., educational neglect and exposure to family violence). All CIS maltreatment definitions also use a harm or substantial risk of harm standard that includes situations where children have been harmed, as well as situations where children have not yet been harmed but are considered to have been at substantial risk of harm. The inclusion of substantial risk of harm reflects the clinical and legislative definitions used in many Canadian jurisdictions (see e.g., Section 37(2) of the [Child and Family Services Act of Ontario, 1990](#)). Information on documented harm was collected as well allowing for comparisons with data based on the narrower harm standard used in the Third National Incidence Study in the US ([Sedlak & Broadhurst, 1996](#)).

To ensure that cases involving multiple forms of maltreatment were tracked, every investigation could be classified under up to three forms of maltreatment. The results of the investigations fell under four possible substantiation classifications. A case was considered substantiated if the balance of evidence indicated that abuse or neglect had occurred. If there was not enough evidence to substantiate maltreatment but nevertheless remained a suspicion that maltreatment had occurred, a case was classified as suspected. A case was classified as unsubstantiated if there was sufficient evidence to conclude that the child had not been maltreated. Unsubstantiated cases that were considered to have been reported maliciously by someone who knew that maltreatment had not occurred were classified as false allegations.

Analysis

The analysis presented in this paper focuses primarily on the subsample of 3,786 cases where maltreatment was substantiated. Incidence estimates were calculated by applying annualization and regionalization weights that reflect the sampling strategy used (see [Trocmé et al., 2001a, 2001b](#) for details of weighting procedures). Variance estimates that take into consideration the stratified cluster sampling design were calculated using the replicate weights method with the WesVar PC JKn jackknife procedure ([Lehtonen & Pahkinen, 1995](#); [Westat, 2000](#)). Chi-square analyses were used to test for significance in comparing characteristics associated with different forms of maltreatment. The WesVar RS3 adjusted chi-square statistic was used to take into account variance estimates. To avoid inflating chi-square statistics, all analyses were conducted using a weighted sample equivalent to the original sample size rather than the population estimates.

Findings

An estimated 135,573 child maltreatment investigations were conducted in Canada in 1998, a rate of 21.52 investigations per 1,000 children. Forty-five percent of investigations were substantiated and an additional 22% of investigations maltreatment remained suspected ([Table 1](#)). The remaining third of all investigations were unsubstantiated. While most reports were made in good faith, reports were judged to have been intentionally false in 4% of investigations.

Table 1

Estimated^a rate and incidence of child maltreatment investigations by level of substantiation in Canada in 1998

	Substantiated	Suspected	Unsubstantiated	Intentionally false	Total
Maltreatment investigations					
Child investigations	61200	29700	39400	5300	135600
Incidence per 1,000 children	9.71	4.71	6.25	0.85	21.52
Standard error	1.17	0.56	0.75	0.21	2.18
Row percentage (%)	45	22	29	4	100

^a Weighted estimates rounded to the nearest 100 based on a sample of 7,672.

The CIS identified up to 22 forms of maltreatment subsumed under four main categories: physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and emotional maltreatment. The design of the CIS allows for the identification of up to three forms of maltreatment relative to each investigated child, with the form that best characterizes the major investigatory concern being classified as the primary form of maltreatment. The 22 specific forms of maltreatment are presented in terms of their primary or secondary forms. The four main categories of maltreatment are presented in Table 2 using two different classification schemes in terms of whether a case was classified under a specific category on the basis of the primary form of maltreatment only or on the basis of the primary or secondary form of maltreatment. Both classification schemes are presented in this article to facilitate comparisons with classification schemes used in other countries. The primary classification is used in Table 3 to describe victim characteristics to allow for appropriate chi-square analyses.

Physical abuse was noted in 25% of substantiated cases, but was the primary form of maltreatment in only 23% of all substantiated cases. Most of these cases involved the use of some sort of physical discipline, defined as a child being harmed or at substantial risk of harm as a result of inappropriate punishment (e.g., hitting with hand or object). Cases of sexual abuse account for only 10% of cases, with touching and fondling genitals being most frequently noted.

Close to half (46%) of all substantiated cases involve neglect, primarily in the form of failure to supervise leading to physical harm or substantial risk of physical harm. Failure to supervise leading to sexual harm or risk of sexual harm was classified separately to track cases of sexual abuse where the non-offending parent(s) knew or should have known of the possibility of sexual molestation and failed to protect the child adequately. Physical neglect, which includes inadequate nutrition or clothing, and unhygienic and/or dangerous living conditions, was documented in 9% of substantiated cases. Emotional maltreatment was noted in 37% of cases, with exposure to spousal violence being the most frequently documented form in the category. Emotional abuse, defined as overtly hostile, punitive treatment, or habitual or extreme verbal abuse, was confirmed in 13% of cases. While neglect and emotional maltreatment are the most often documented forms of maltreatment, it should be noted that they are the secondary form in many of these cases.

Table 3 presents key victim characteristics by form of maltreatment. Harm resulting from maltreatment varies considerably by primary form of maltreatment. Some form of physical injury was noted in 50% of substantiated physical abuse cases, whereas harm was noted far less often for other forms of maltreatment. Cases involving physical harm rarely involve injuries

Table 2
Estimated count and incidence of substantiated maltreatment in Canada in 1998

	Substantiated investigations ^a	Substantiated investigations per 1,000 children	Standard error of estimated incidence per 1,000	Proportion of all substantiated investigations (%)
Physical abuse				
Primary or secondary form of maltreatment				
Shaken Baby Syndrome	200	0.03	0.01	0.3
Inappropriate punishment	10800	1.70	0.21	18
Other physical abuse	4900	0.77	0.06	8
Total primary or secondary form	15600	2.47	0.25	25
Primary form only	14200	2.25	0.24	23
Sexual abuse				
Primary or secondary form of maltreatment				
Sexual activity completed	1300	0.19	0.04	2
Sexual activity attempted	900	0.13	0.03	1
Touching/fondling genitals	4000	0.63	0.17	7
Exposure of genitals	700	0.11	0.02	1
Exploitation: pornography/prostitution	_b	_b	_b	_b
Sexual harassment	300	0.04	0.02	0
Voyeurism	_b	_b	_b	_b
Total primary or secondary form	5900	0.93	0.18	10
Primary form only	5500	0.86	0.18	9
Neglect				
Primary or secondary form of maltreatment				
Failure to supervise/protect (physical)	13500	2.14	0.37	22
Failure to supervise/protect (sexual)	1500	0.23	0.06	2
Physical neglect	5400	0.84	0.11	9
Medical neglect	2400	0.38	0.07	4
Failure to provide treatment	500	0.08	0.02	1
Permitting maladaptive/criminal behavior	4100	0.64	0.05	7
Abandonment	3300	0.52	0.05	5
Educational neglect	3100	0.49	0.07	5
Total primary or secondary form	28200	4.47	0.43	46
Primary form only	23100	3.66	0.43	38
Emotional maltreatment				
Primary or secondary form of maltreatment				
Emotional abuse	7800	1.24	0.33	13
Non-organic failure to thrive	_b	_b	_b	_b
Emotional neglect	3700	0.58	0.14	6

Table 2 (Continued)

	Substantiated investigations ^a	Substantiated investigations per 1,000 children	Standard error of estimated incidence per 1,000	Proportion of all substantiated investigations (%)
Exposed to spousal violence	13300	2.10	0.47	22
Total primary or secondary form	23000	3.63	0.53	37
Primary form only	13900	2.20	0.43	23
Total substantiated investigation ^c	61200	9.71	0.99	100

^a Weighted estimates rounded to the nearest 100 based on a sample of 3,456 substantiated child investigations.

^b Insufficient number of cases to derive a reportable estimate.

^c Rows add up to more than the total because some cases involve more than one form of maltreatment.

requiring medical attention, with broken bones and head trauma documented three percent of substantiated cases. Signs of emotional harm were noted in a third of substantiated cases, with severe harm requiring treatment documented most often in sexual abuse cases. The emotional harm rating only include situations where signs of emotional harm were judged to be due to maltreatment—such as withdrawal, sexualized behavior, or violent behavior. It is likely that many victims who are not visibly symptomatic at the time of the investigation are nevertheless harmed in ways that were not recorded by this study. Close to half of all physical abuse cases are single incidents, generally incidents involving an injury resulting from the use of inappropriate punishment. In contrast, other forms of maltreatment are more likely to involve situations that have been ongoing for more than 6 months.

Victims include children of all age, although the distribution by age group is highly skewed in cases of physical abuse, where only 10% of victims are between the ages of 0 and 3 while 40% are between 12 and 15 years old. Boys are more often victims in cases of physical abuse and neglect, whereas girls are more often the victims in cases of sexual abuse and emotional maltreatment.

Discussion

Limitations

Some caution is required in interpreting the study findings. As with most administrative data, ratings provided by investigating workers could not be independently confirmed. Most noteworthy is the classification of types of maltreatment and level of substantiation. These are not independently observable events, but are judgments made by the worker at the end of an investigation on the basis of information collected during the investigation. Other limitations that were noted earlier in the article should be restated. The CIS only documents cases investigated by child welfare authorities. Excluded from the study are non-reported cases, cases only reported to the police, cases that are screened out before a full investigation is completed, and reports made on already open cases.

Table 3

Victim characteristics by primary category of substantiated maltreatment

	Physical abuse	Sexual abuse	Neglect	Emotional maltreatment
Estimated ^a count of substantiated maltreatment	14200	5400	23100	13900
Bruises, cuts, and scrapes ^{**}				
Yes (%)	43	4	2	2
No (%)	57	96	98	98
Bums and scalds ^a				
Yes (%)	1	0	1	0
No (%)	99	100	99	100
Broken bones ^a				
Yes (%)	1	0	0	0
No (%)	99	100	100	100
Head trauma ^a				
Yes (%)	2	0	0	0
No (%)	98	100	100	100
Other health conditions [*]				
Yes (%)	4	6	8	1
No (%)	96	94	92	99
Emotional harm [*]				
Documented harm, no treatment required (%)	15	9	16	10
Severe harm, treatment required (%)	19	38	19	19
Emotional harm not documented (%)	66	53	65	61
Duration of maltreatment ^{**}				
Single incident (%)	46	31	17	16
Multiple incidents for less than 6 months (%)	13	19	24	13
Multiple incidents for more than 6 months (%)	29	44	42	57
Unknown duration (%)	12	6	16	14
Victim age ^{**}				
0–3 (%)	10	16	27	27
4–7 (%)	21	38	25	30
8–11 (%)	29	18	22	26
12–15 (%)	40	28	26	17
Victim sex ^{**}				
Male (%)	60	31	53	46
Female (%)	40	69	47	54

Chi-square not calculated because of cells with less than 5 observations.

^a Weighted estimates rounded to the nearest 100 based on a sample of 3,456 substantiated child investigations.^{*} $p < .05$, level of significance for chi-square calculations.^{**} $p < .005$, level of significance for chi-square calculations.

Some implications for practices and policies

As the first national study to examine the incidence of reported child abuse and neglect in Canada, the CIS provides an important context for examining current practices and policies in child welfare in Canada and an essential baseline for tracking changes in child welfare caseloads in the future. A number of findings stand out in contrast to some of the directions that have been emphasized in Canadian child welfare. While many provinces and territories have been developing risk assessment procedures designed to prevent severe injuries (Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1997), the CIS found that a relatively small proportion of cases, less than 10% of substantiated investigations, involve documented injuries. In contrast, some type of observable emotional harm was noted in 40% of substantiated investigations, and emotional or behavioral problems were noted for 50% of investigated children.

The high proportion of emotional maltreatment cases documented by the study was unexpected, given that several jurisdictions do not include specific reference to emotional maltreatment and most do not explicitly include exposure to spousal violence as grounds for intervention (Creaghan, Chipperfield, de Vink, Garneer, & Squires, 1998; Panel of Experts on Child Protection, 1998). The fact that limited legislative coverage does not necessarily lead to fewer cases being substantiated is consistent with research on the impact of legislation on child protection practice. In his study of United States protection legislation, Levine (1998) found that there was no association between rates of substantiation and the standard of proof required by State child protection laws.

Other findings may stand out as specific issues arise. For instance, some critics have raised concerns about a perceived increase in intentionally false allegations of maltreatment, especially in cases of sexual abuse involving custody disputes (Special Joint Committee on Child Custody and Access, 1998). The CIS data indicate that these cases are in fact quite rare with only 4% of investigations considered to have been intentionally false.

International comparisons

The CIS provides a first opportunity to compare investigated child abuse and neglect in Canada to investigated child abuse and neglect in other countries. Such comparisons should be made with caution, given differences in statutes, in the structure of child welfare services, in definitions and methods for collecting data, and in public awareness of child maltreatment (Lavergne & Tourigny, 2000). Conducted with attention to as much definitional detail as possible, international comparisons nevertheless provide an important perspective for interpreting national statistics.

The National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) provides the most extensive annual statistics on investigated maltreatment in the United States (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). The Child Protection Services (CPS) portion of the National Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS) could not be used because rates of maltreatment, as documented by the NCANDS, have changed significantly since 1993, when the most recent NIS was conducted. The NCANDS tracks investigations at the family level while they track substantiated at the level of child victims. Based on the total number of screened-in referrals, the total number of family-based investigations for 1998 was

1,851,267 investigations at a rate of 26.3 family-based investigations per 1,000 children. The total number of child investigations documented by CIS is 135,573, involving 96,014 families. This translates into a rate of 15 family-based investigations per 1,000 children. The rate of victimization reported by the NCANDS for 1998 (incidence of substantiated maltreatment) was 12.9 per 1,000 children, a decrease from a high of 15.3 per 1,000 children in 1993. Of these cases, 55.8% were classified as neglect, 22.5% as physical abuse, 12.4% as sexual abuse, and 4.7% as psychological abuse. By comparison, the rate of substantiated maltreatment reported by the CIS is 9.71 per 1,000 children, with 46.1% of cases classified involving neglect, 25.4% physical abuse, 9.6% sexual abuse, and 37.4% emotional maltreatment. The difference in rates of investigated maltreatment in Canada and in the United States is notable given that Canada and the United States share a similar history in the development of child welfare statutes and services, including mandatory reporting. While differences in the structure of child welfare services and statutes may nevertheless account for the lower recorded rates in Canada, it is also possible that the may be attributed to lower family poverty rates, universal access to health care, better funded public education, and generally better living conditions for families at risk of maltreatment (Chamberland et al., 1986; Garbarino & Kostelny, 1992; Zybblock, 1996). Further analyses of these differences, focusing in particular on state-level variations in rates of maltreatment may help in understanding the nature of these differences.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW, 1999) annually collects aggregate statistics on reported and investigated maltreatment from the eight states and territories responsible for child protection services in Australia. Data collected by the AIHW from state and territorial authorities are not directly comparable because each jurisdiction has its own legislation, policies and practices in child protection. For 1997–1998, the AIHW reported that rates of substantiated maltreatment range from 5.9 per 1,000 children to 1.1 per 1,000 children, although in the three largest states (New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland) incidence rates were more consistent, ranging from of 5.1 to 5.9 per 1,000 children. In comparison, the rate of substantiated maltreatment reported by the CIS is 9.71 per 1,000 children. Unlike the three-tiered substantiation classification used by the CIS, most Australian protection authorities use a two-tiered substantiation classification, which tends to yield relatively higher rates of substantiated cases. Therefore, in Australia, rates of substantiation ranged from 40 to 54%. In Australia's three largest states, the proportion of substantiated physical abuse cases for 1997–1998 ranged from 27 to 35%, the proportion of sexual abuse cases from 8 to 29%, and the proportion of neglect cases from 18 to 42%. Comparison with rates of investigated and substantiated maltreatment in Australia should be interpreted with even greater caution, given that the development of child welfare services may not have followed a similar pattern in Canada and Australia. Nevertheless, the lower rates in Australia are noteworthy and call for further analysis of possible reasons for such variations in rates.

Further research

Canadian child welfare policy has been primarily driven by responses to individual tragedies or policy and service trends outside of Canada. As the first national study to examine of investigated child abuse and neglect in Canada, the CIS provides an important context for developing a better understanding of the profile and needs of children and families investigated

by child welfare authorities. In addition to its utility as a context setting database, the CIS also provides a long overdue baseline against which it will be possible to track changes in the rates and characteristics of investigated maltreatment over time. Data for the second cycle of the CIS are being collected in the fall of 2003. The study can also serve as a point from which international comparisons can be made, in order to understand better the relative effects of social and economic policies as they intersect with child welfare services and policies. With over 300 variables and information on close to 8,000 investigated children, the CIS is also a rich research database that can be used to examine factors associated with several key decisions, including case substantiation, provision of services, placement in out-of-home care and the involvement of child welfare and criminal courts.

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Résumé

French-language abstract not available at time of publication.

Resumen

Objetivo: Presentar resultados clave del Estudio Canadiense sobre Incidencia Reportada de Maltrato a los Niños (CIS) en suficiente detalle para ofrecer una base que permita comparaciones internacionales en términos de las formas y la severidad del maltrato y la edad y el sexo de las víctimas.

Método: Una encuesta aplicada a una muestra al azar de 51 áreas de servicios de bienestar infantil en todo Canadá rastreó las investigaciones sobre maltrato a los niños realizadas durante los meses de Octubre a Diciembre 1998, y produjo una muestra nacional de 7,672 investigaciones sobre maltrato a los niños. La información fue recogida directamente de los investigadores sobre el niño y el contexto familiar, características del perpetrador, severidad y tipos de maltrato y resultados del servicio y de la corte sobre las investigaciones.

Resultados: El Cuarenta y cinco por ciento de las investigaciones fueron sostenidas y en el 22% de las investigaciones se mantuvo la sospecha de maltrato. Las razones primarias para la investigación fueron: abuso físico (31%), abuso sexual (11%), negligencia (40%), y maltrato emocional (19%). Una gran proporción de los casos de abuso físico son incidentes aislados incluyendo niños mayores y tienden más a provocar heridas. El abuso sexual, la negligencia, y el maltrato emocional incluyen más situaciones crónicas con los niños mostrando señales de daño emocional. Las tasas de maltrato investigado y confirmado son menores en Canadá en comparación con las de Estados Unidos, pero son mayores que las tasas reportadas en Australia.

Conclusiones: El CIS ofrece información muy necesaria para comprender mejor el perfil y las necesidades de los niños y las familias investigadas por las autoridades de bienestar infantil en Canadá. El estudio también es útil como base para comparaciones internacionales.