


Cumulative Risks of Confirmed Maltreatment and Foster Care Placement for American Children

Christopher Wildeman¹
Yale University

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¹The collector of the original data, the funder, the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect, and Cornell University and their agents or employees bear no responsibility for the analyses or interpretations herein. 

1. Background

The usual (social) suspects

- ▶ Parents and families.
- ▶ Neighborhoods and schools.
- ▶ The broader social policy context.

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We ignore child maltreatment and CPS contact

- ▶ (1) Because we assume they are very rare.
- ▶ (2) And we don't know how they affect children.

→ This issue has not reached its potential.

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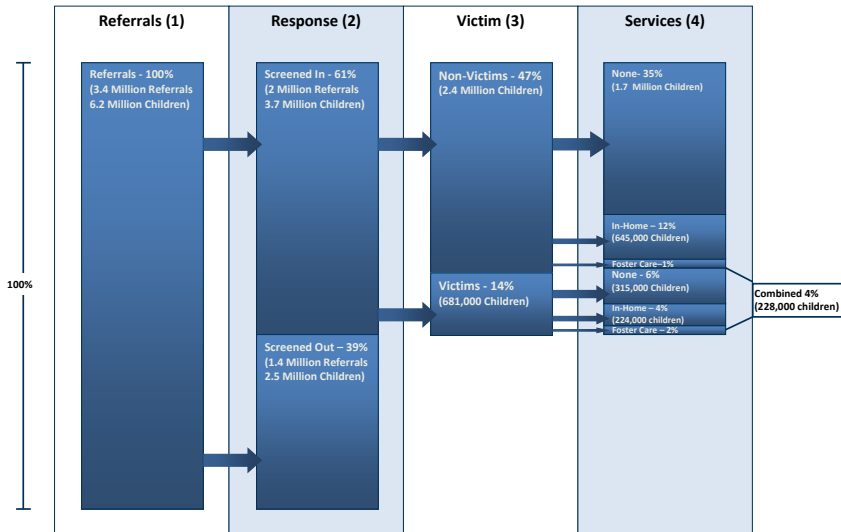
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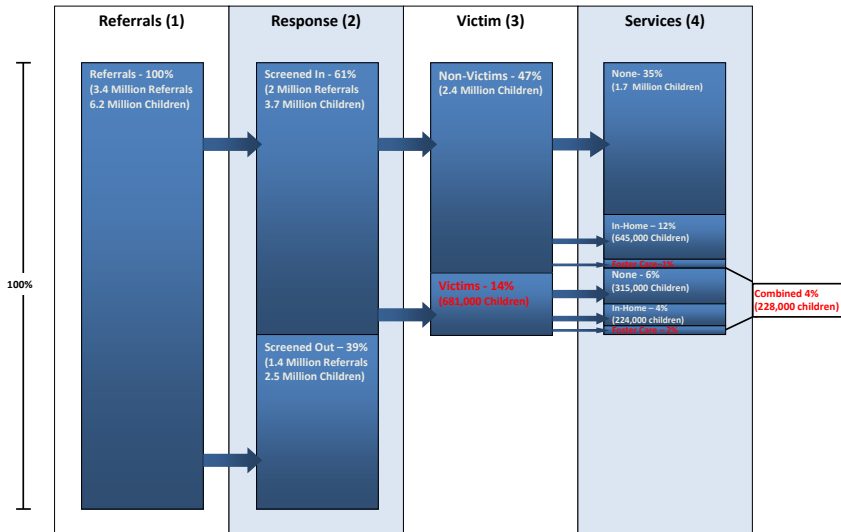
In this talk

- ▶ I estimate (1) what proportion of children will ever experience confirmed maltreatment and foster care placement at any point between birth and age 18 and (2) how the risk of experiencing these events varies by race/ethnicity and sex.

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2. Data

NCANDS

- ▶ National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System.

According to the Children's Bureau, "The NCANDS system is a national data system that provides information on all of cases the Department of Children and Family Services reports of child abuse and neglect. The data are used to identify trends in child abuse and neglect across the country. Although voluntary, 54 states have reported since 2004."

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Measures

- ▶ First confirmed child maltreatment case.
 - ▶ Treat substantiated and indicated cases as confirmed.
 - ▶ Some inaccurate within year, so had to adjust accordingly.
- ▶ Report date, age, sex, race/ethnicity, state, county.

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 - ▶ According to the Children's Bureau, "The AFCARS data contain case level information on all children in foster care for whom State and Tribal title IV-E agencies have responsibility for placement, care or supervision and on children adopted under the auspices of the State and Tribal title IV-E agency."
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Measures

- ▶ First foster care placement.
 - ▶ Include both kin and non-kin placements.
 - ▶ Accurate within year (because few children experience multiple distinct placements in the same year), but not some checks.
- ▶ Placement date, age, sex, race/ethnicity, state, county.

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3. Analytic strategy

Synthetic cohort (or period) life tables

- ▶ Tells us what proportion of a hypothetical cohort of children would ever experience confirmed maltreatment if they were subjected to any given year's age-specific first-confirmed maltreatment rates at each age from birth through age 18.
 - I break all years down by race/ethnicity and sex
 - Although I don't show it, all differences are significant.

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Why not birth cohort life tables?

- ▶ Insufficient data.
 - Could produce estimates to age 7 in HCFHS.
 - Could produce estimates to age 15 in AFCS.

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- ▶ Insufficient data.
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Building a synthetic cohort life table

Cumulative Risk of Confirmed Maltreatment by Age 10, 2005

Age	${}_nD_x$	${}_nN_x$	${}_nAN_x$	${}_nm_x$	${}_nq_x$	${}_0C_x$
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						

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1	1,997					
2	1,071					
3	1,001					
4	957					
5	924					
6	937					
7	905					
8	836					
9	763					
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1	1,997	4,095,537				
2	1,071	4,098,288				
3	1,001	4,058,368				
4	957	4,049,968				
5	924	4,052,579				
6	937	3,931,274				
7	905	3,885,471				
8	836	3,890,518				
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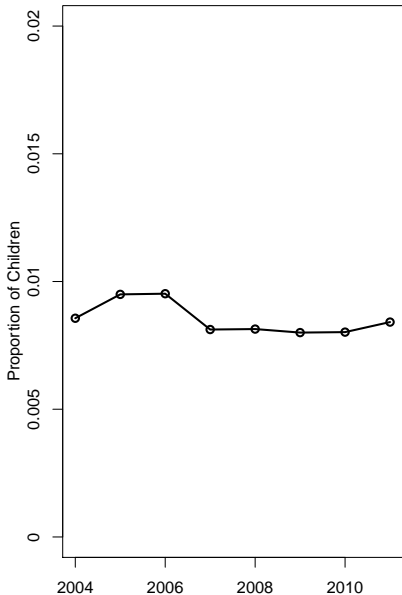
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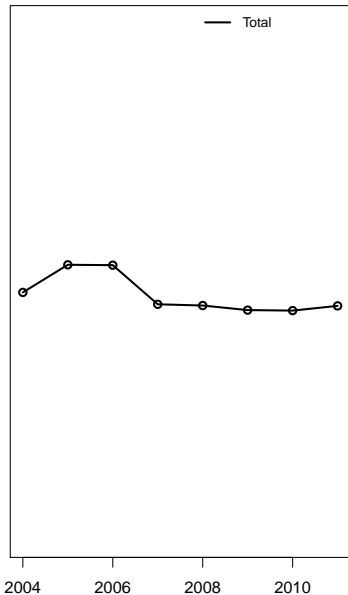
4. Low daily (and yearly) prevalence

Proportion of Children with Confirmed Maltreatment

For Males



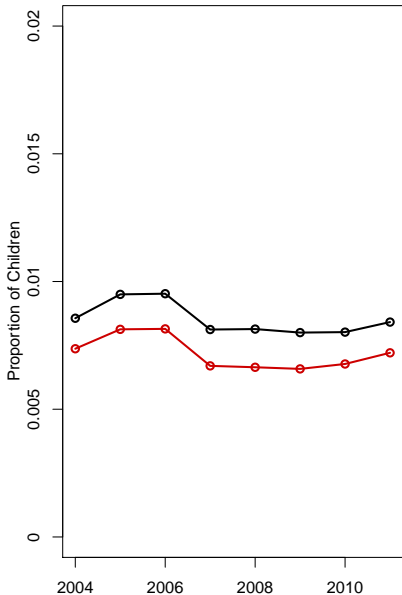
For Females



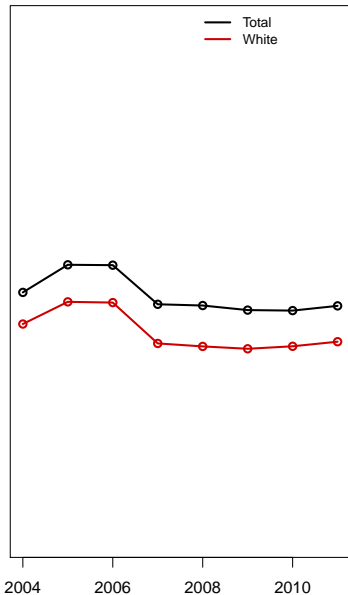
Year

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For Males

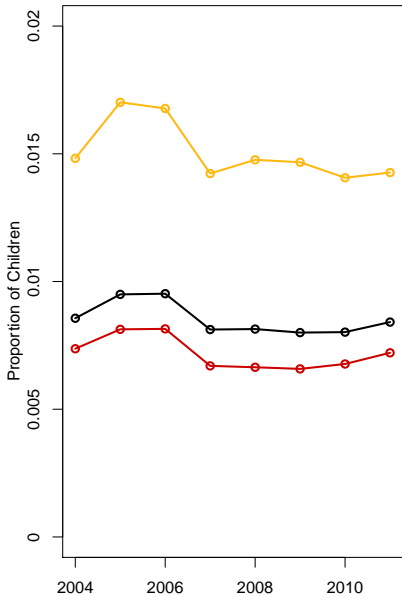


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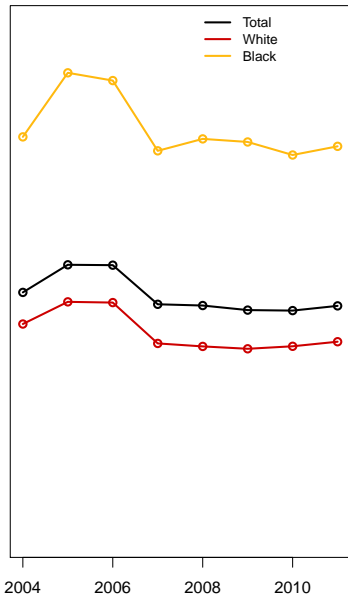


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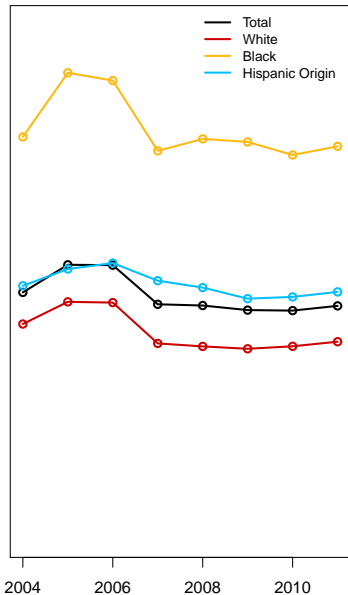
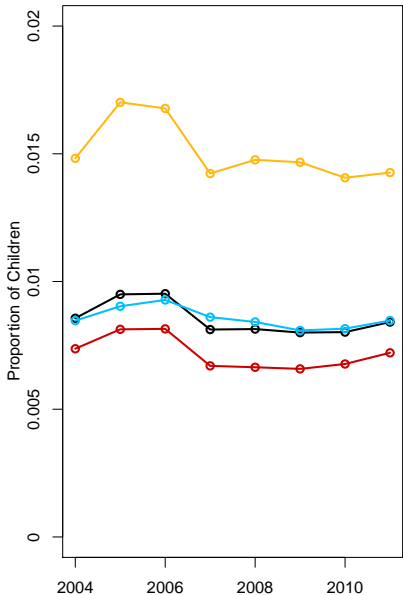
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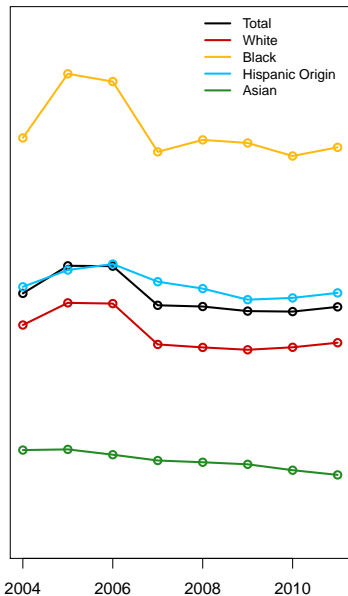
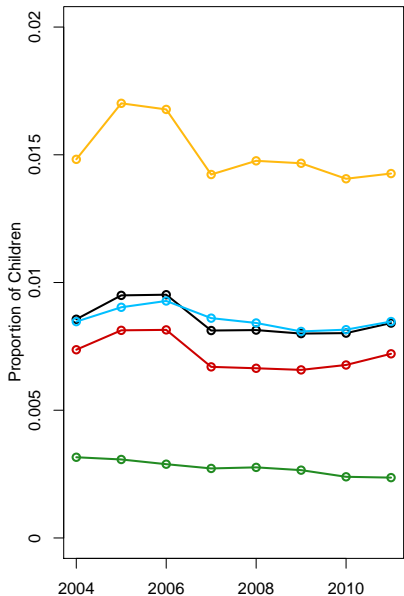


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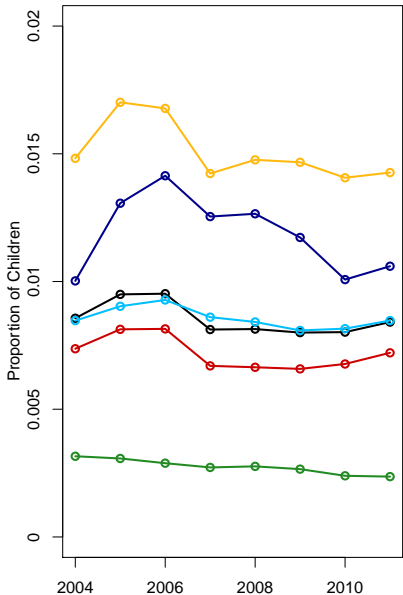
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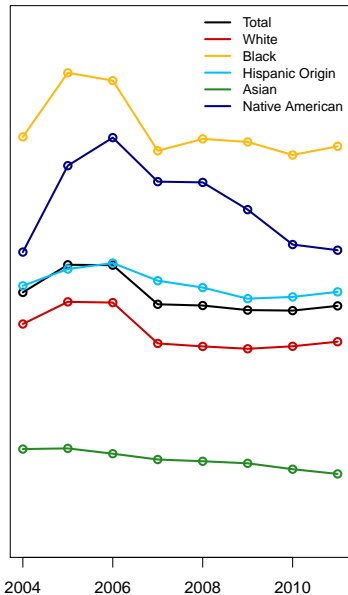


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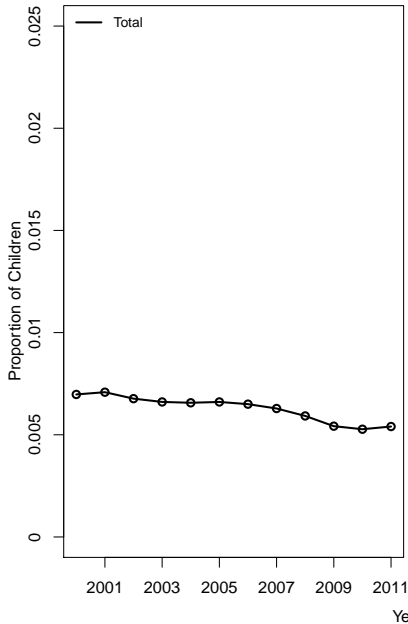
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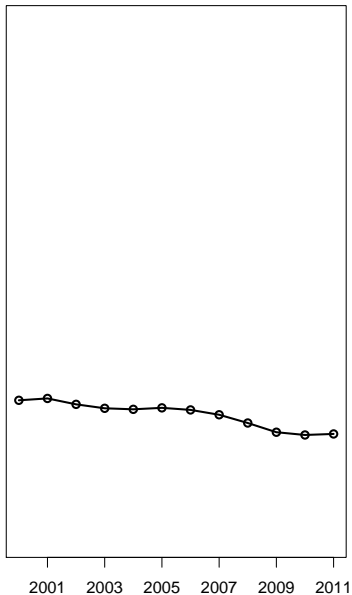
Year

Proportion of Children in Foster Care on September 30

For Males

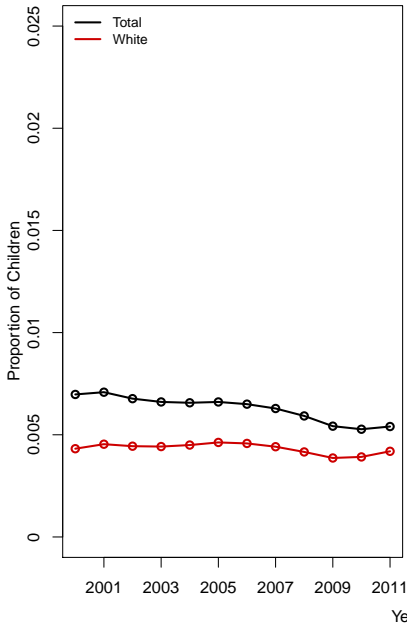


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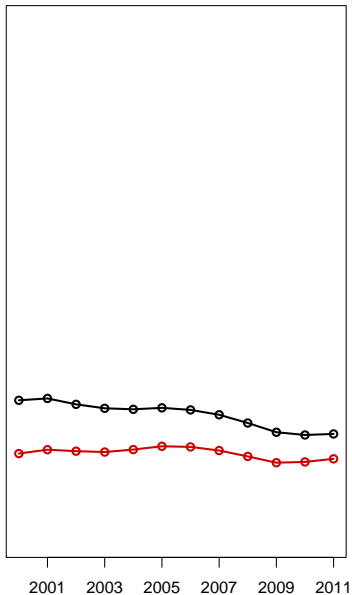


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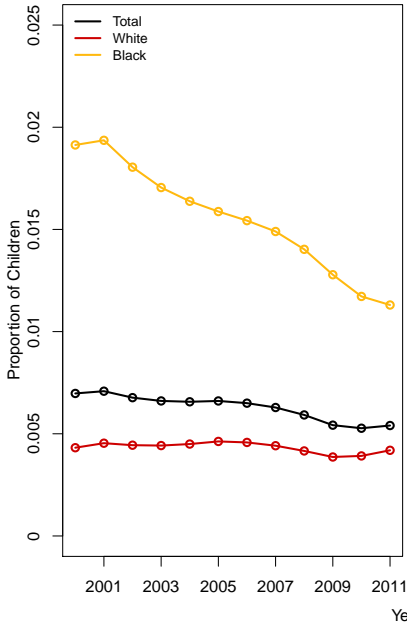


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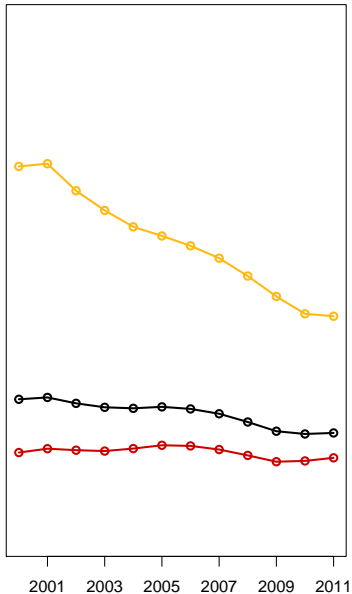


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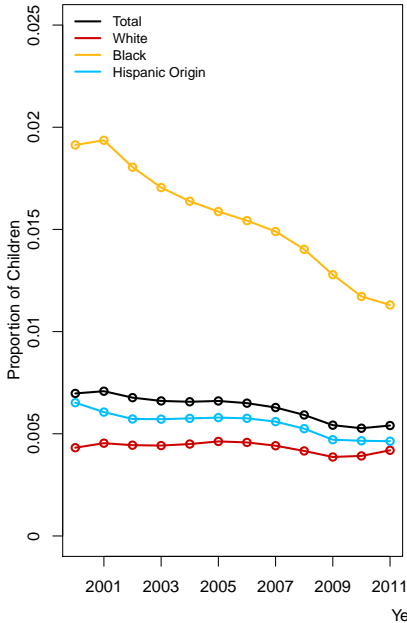


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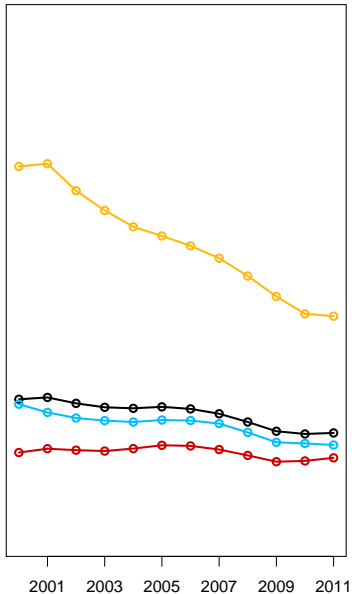


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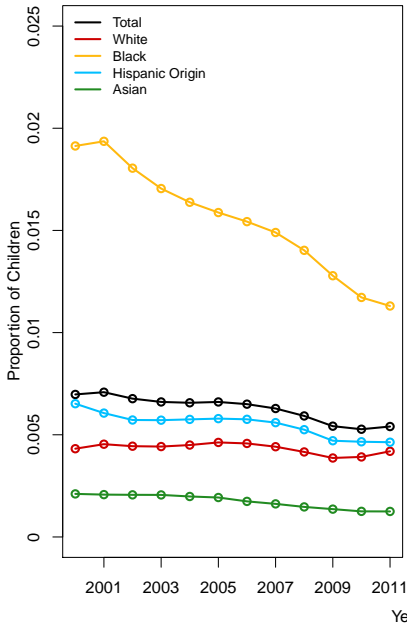


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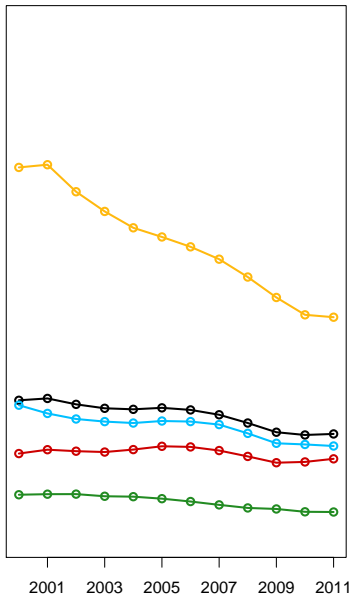


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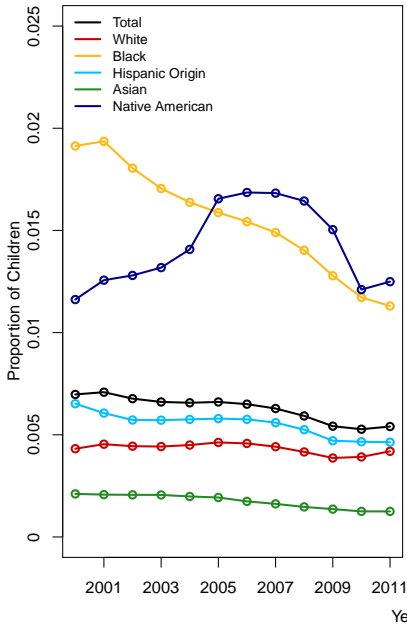


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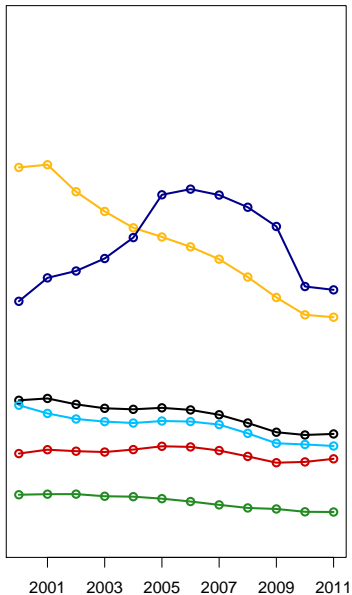


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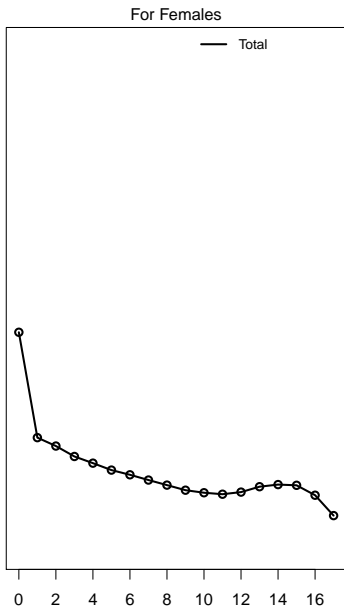
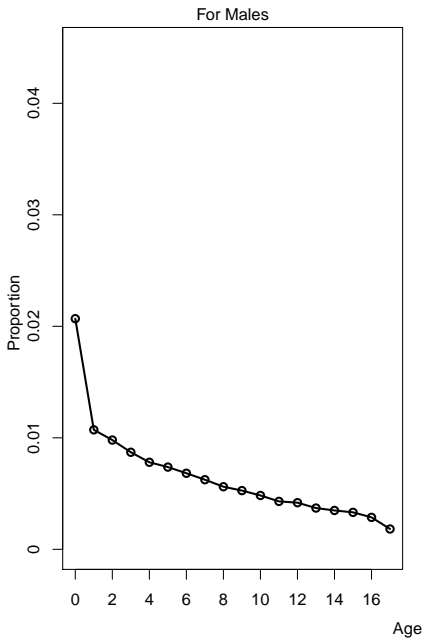


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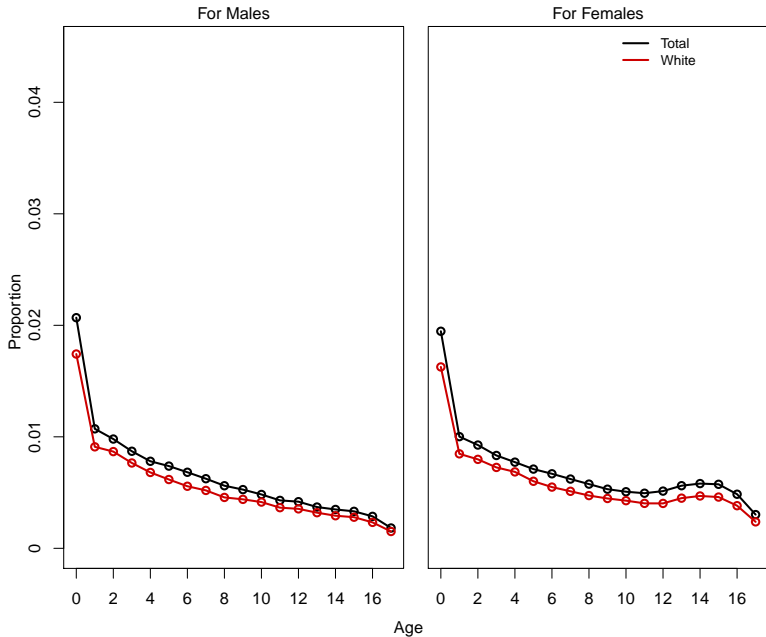


5. Risks highest for the very young

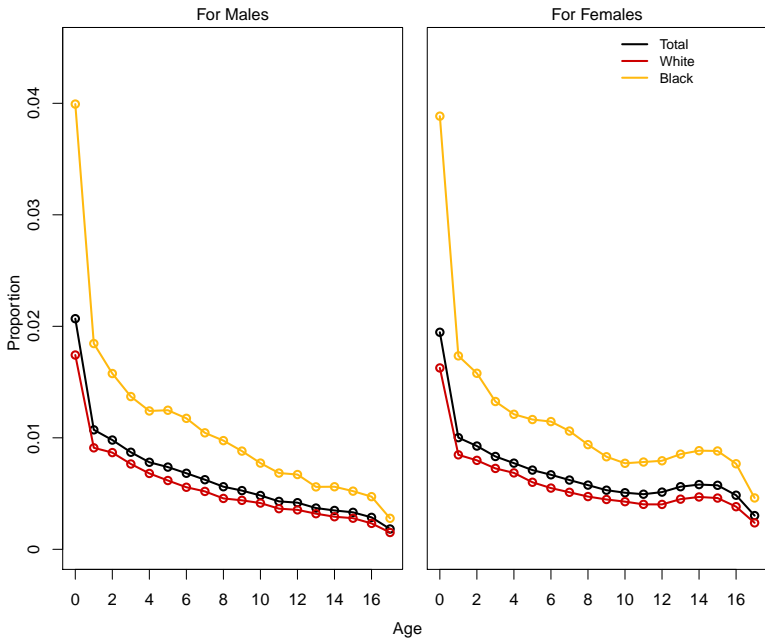
Age-Specific Risk for First Confirmed Maltreatment, 2005



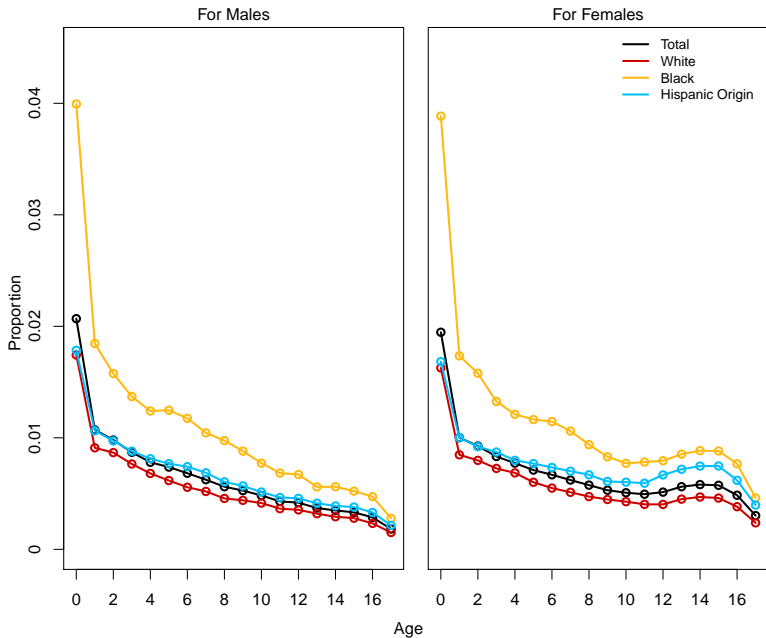
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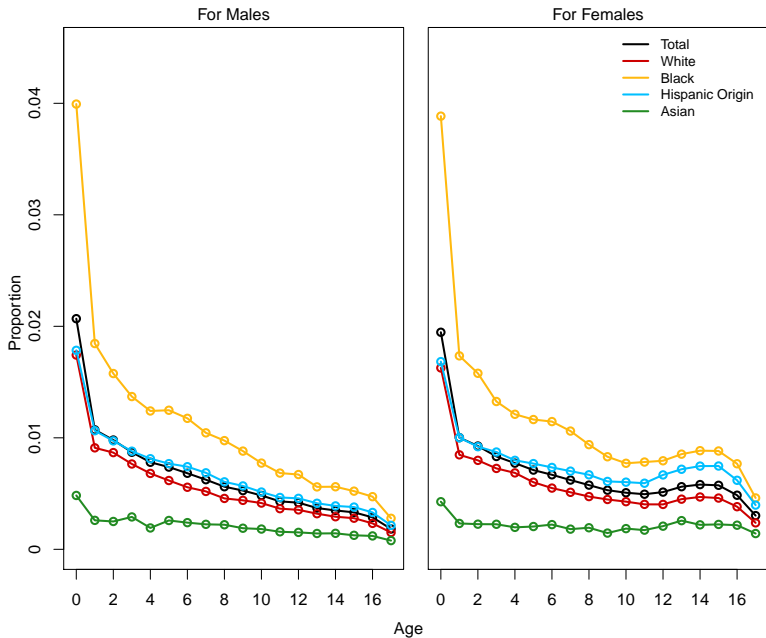
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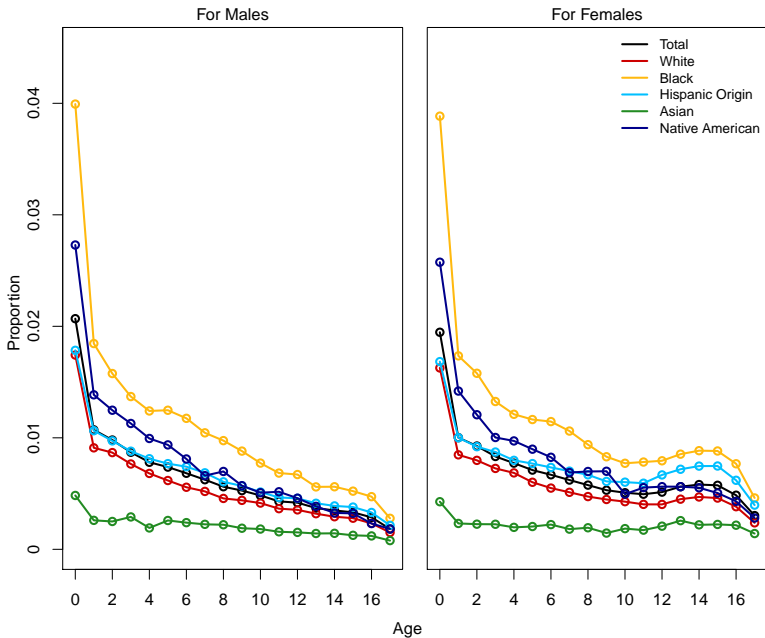
Age-Specific Risk for First Confirmed Maltreatment, 2005



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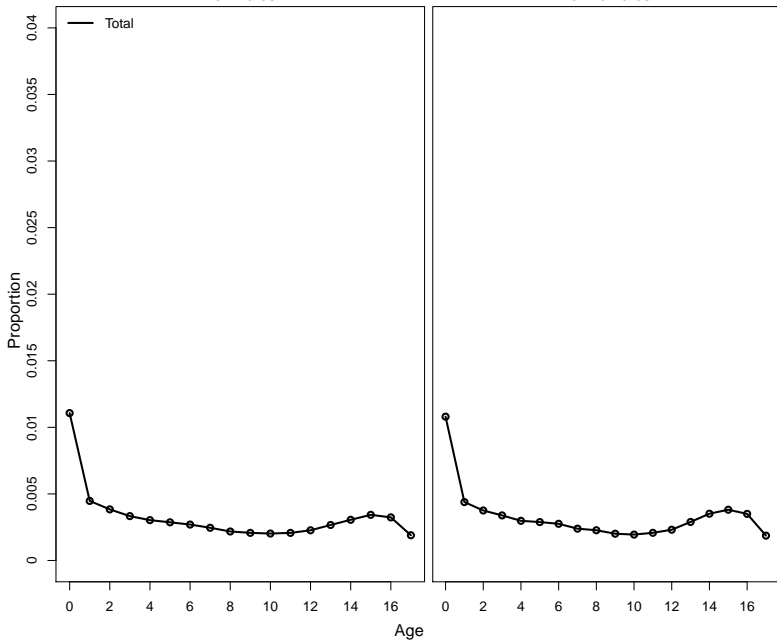
Age-Specific Risk for First Confirmed Maltreatment, 2005



Age-Specific Risks of First-Time Foster Care Placement, 2005

For Males

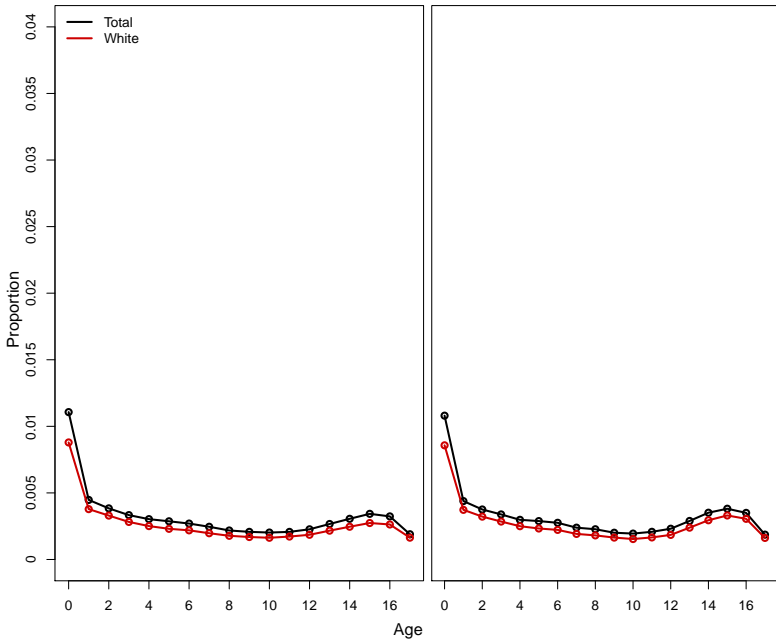
For Females



Age-Specific Risks of First-Time Foster Care Placement, 2005

For Males

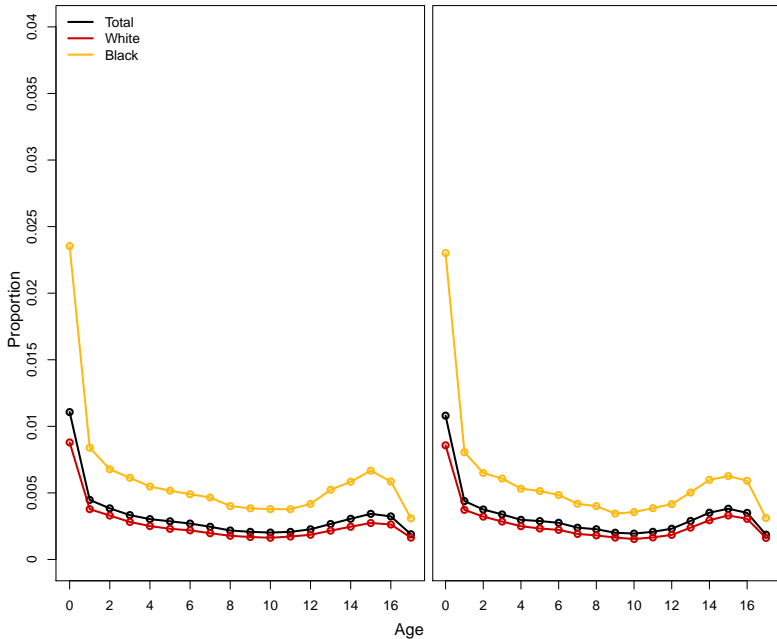
For Females



Age-Specific Risks of First-Time Foster Care Placement, 2005

For Males

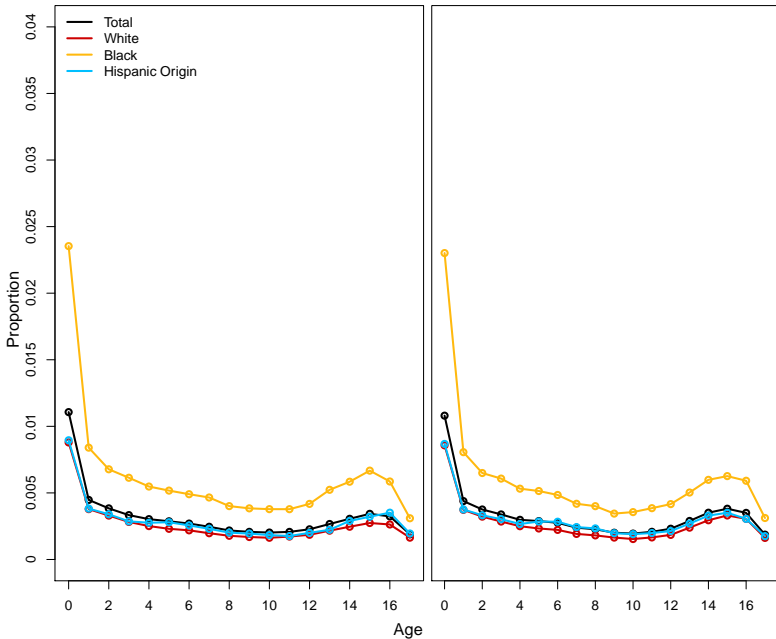
For Females



Age-Specific Risks of First-Time Foster Care Placement, 2005

For Males

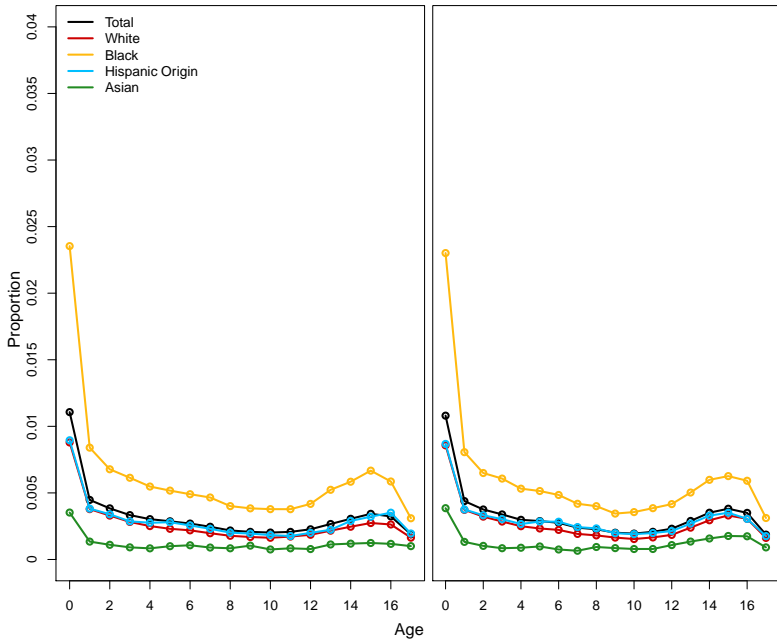
For Females



Age-Specific Risks of First-Time Foster Care Placement, 2005

For Males

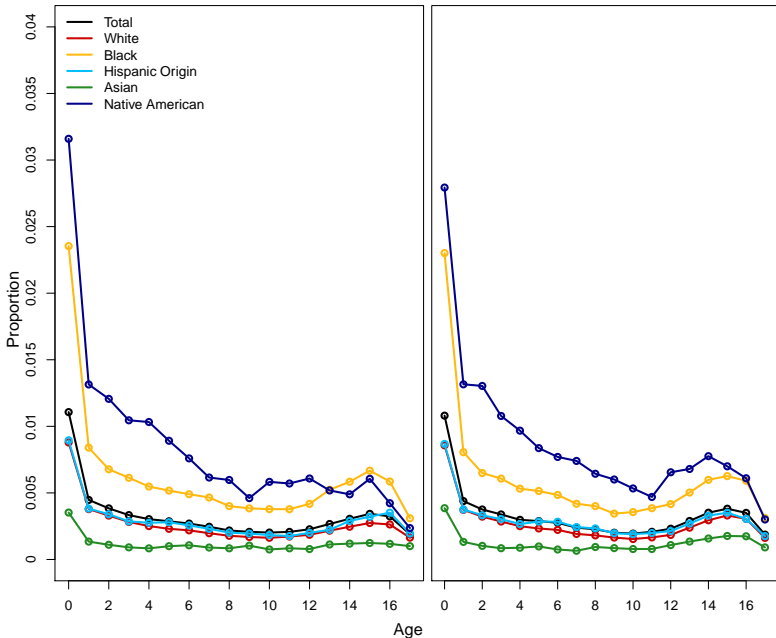
For Females



Age-Specific Risks of First-Time Foster Care Placement, 2005

For Males

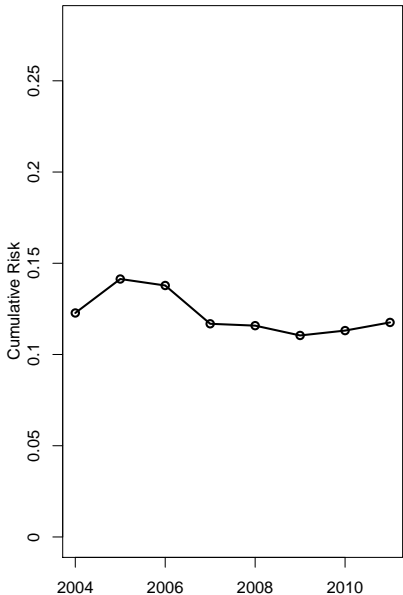
For Females



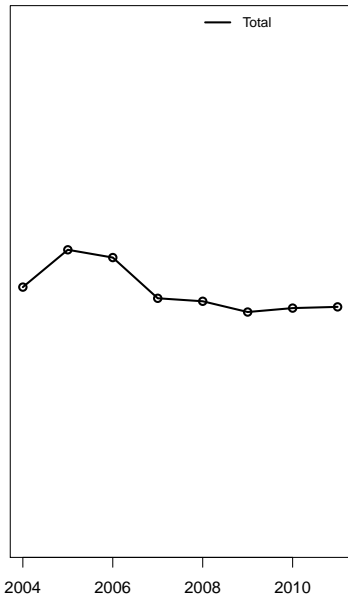
6. High cumulative prevalence

Cumulative Risk of Confirmed Maltreatment by Demographic Group

For Males



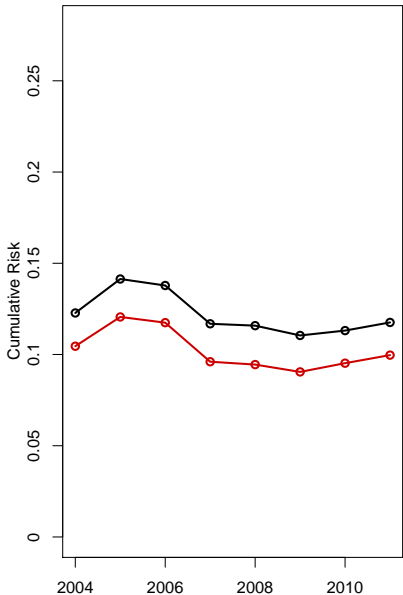
For Females



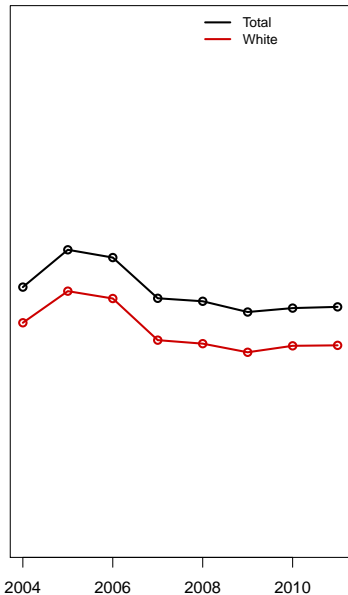
Year

Cumulative Risk of Confirmed Maltreatment by Demographic Group

For Males



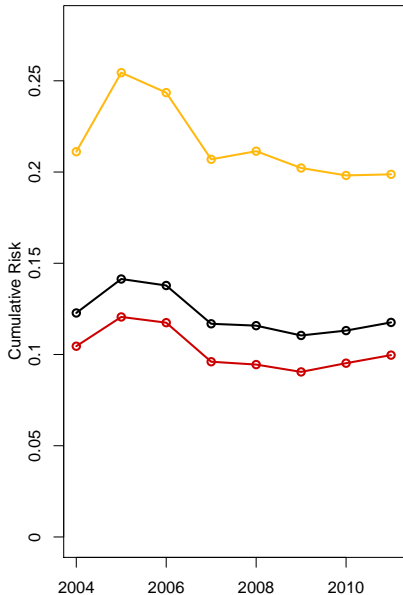
For Females



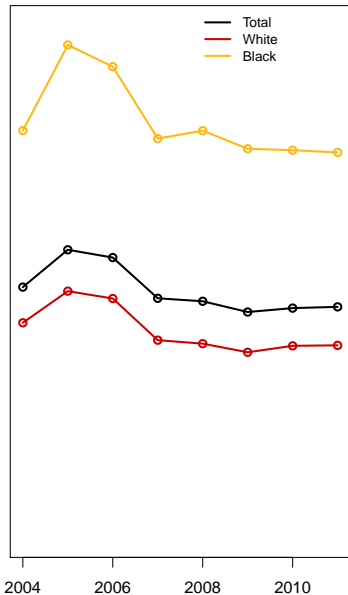
Year

Cumulative Risk of Confirmed Maltreatment by Demographic Group

For Males



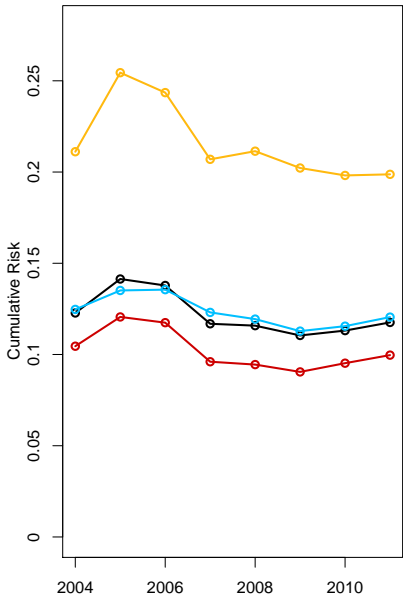
For Females



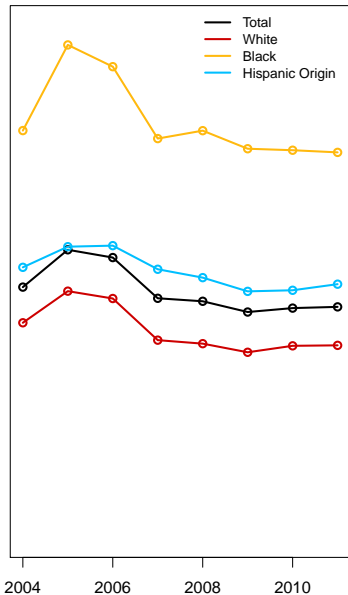
Year

Cumulative Risk of Confirmed Maltreatment by Demographic Group

For Males



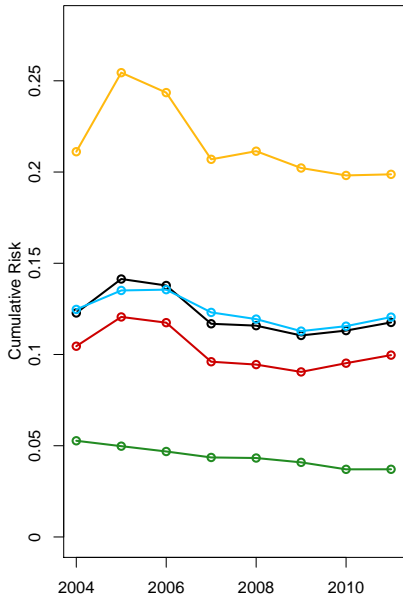
For Females



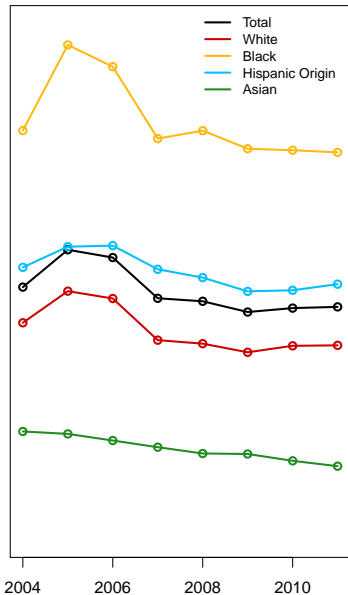
Year

Cumulative Risk of Confirmed Maltreatment by Demographic Group

For Males



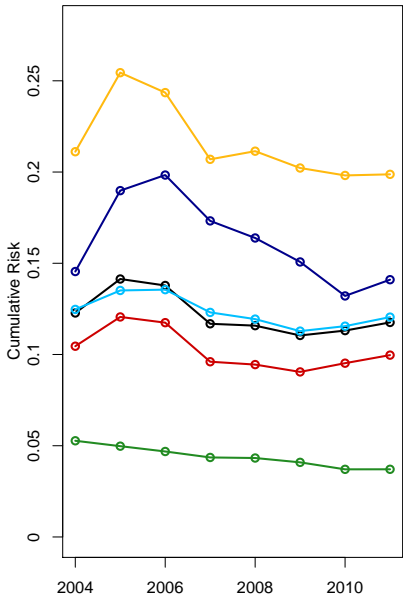
For Females



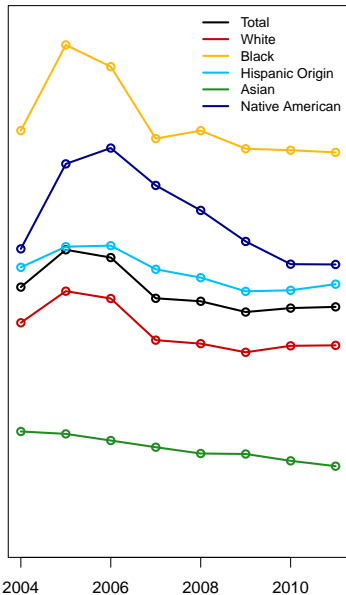
Year

Cumulative Risk of Confirmed Maltreatment by Demographic Group

For Males



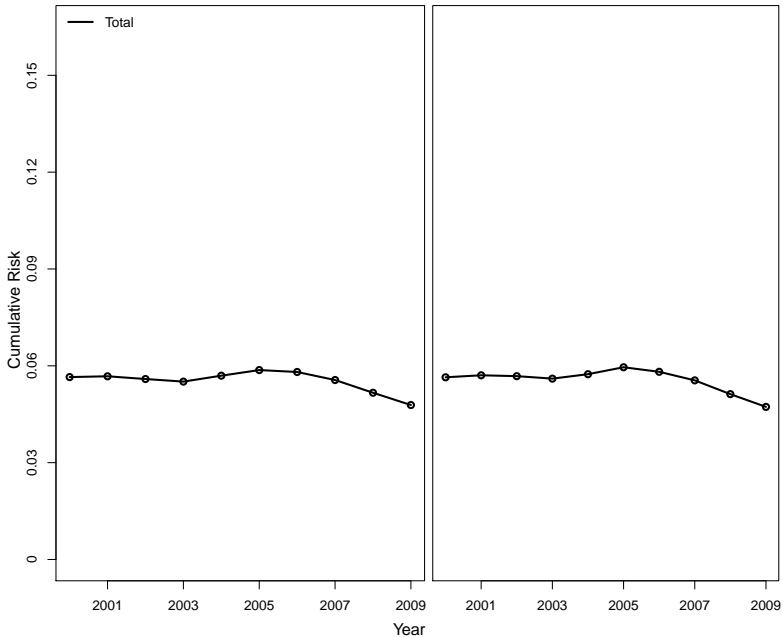
For Females



Cumulative Risk of Foster Care Placement by Age 18

For Males

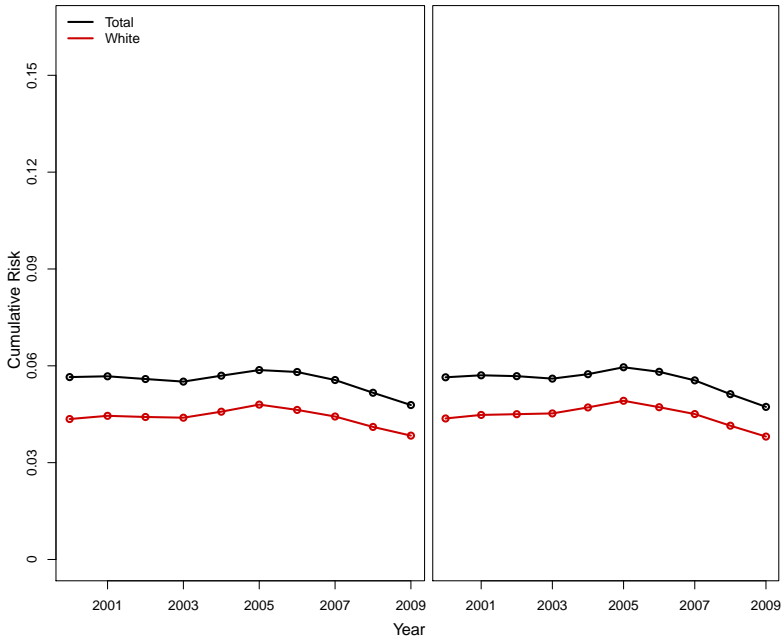
For Females



Cumulative Risk of Foster Care Placement by Age 18

For Males

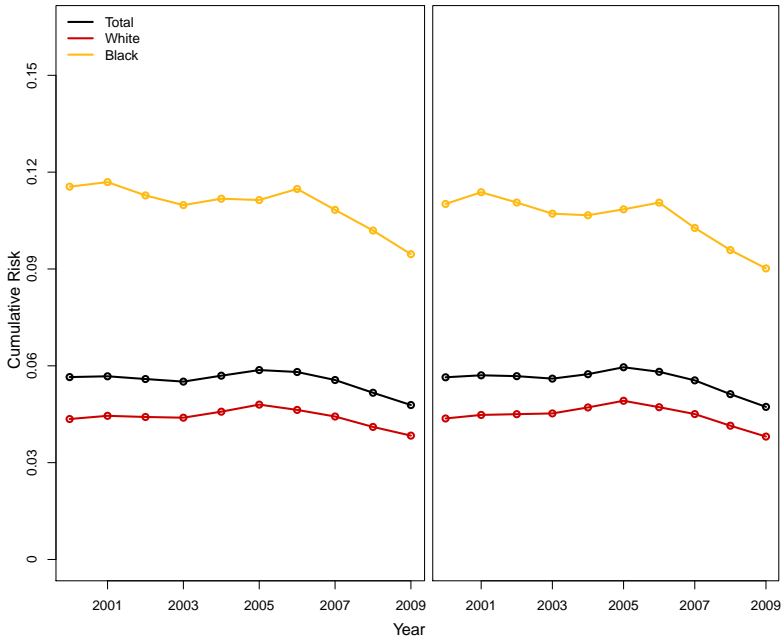
For Females



Cumulative Risk of Foster Care Placement by Age 18

For Males

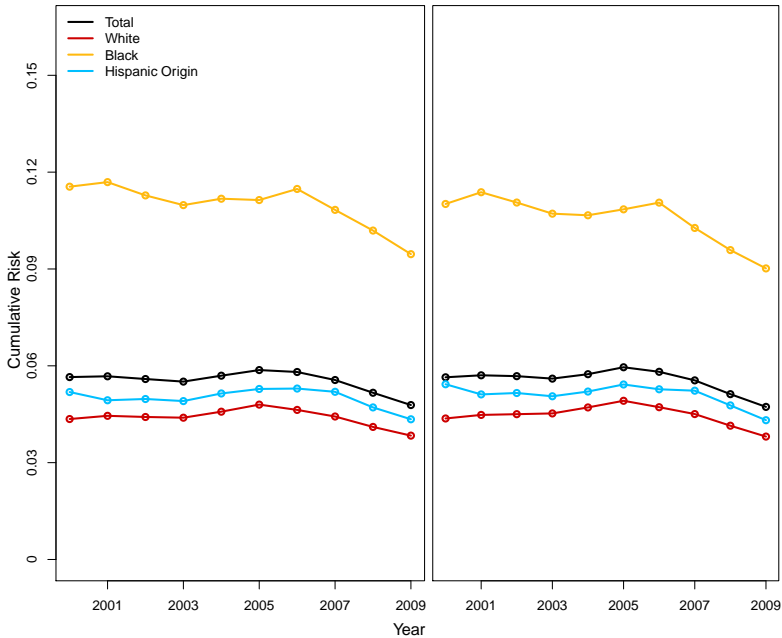
For Females



Cumulative Risk of Foster Care Placement by Age 18

For Males

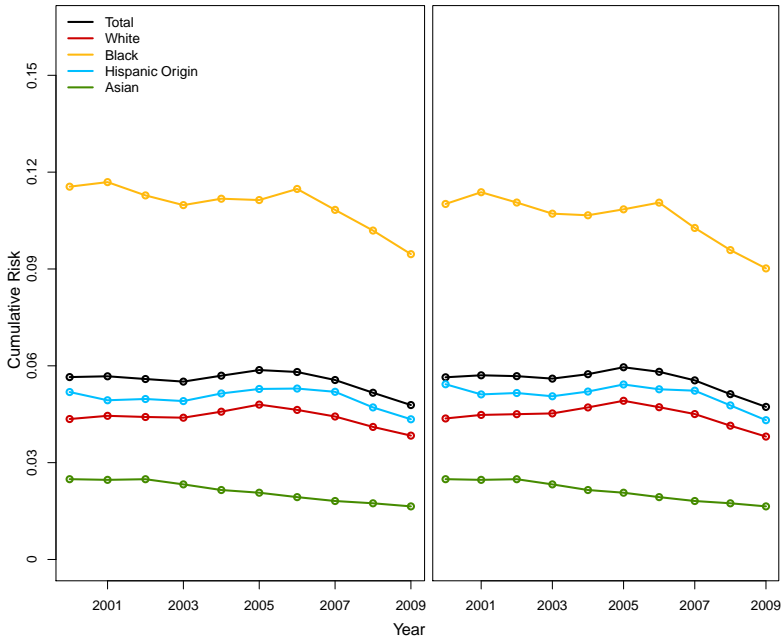
For Females



Cumulative Risk of Foster Care Placement by Age 18

For Males

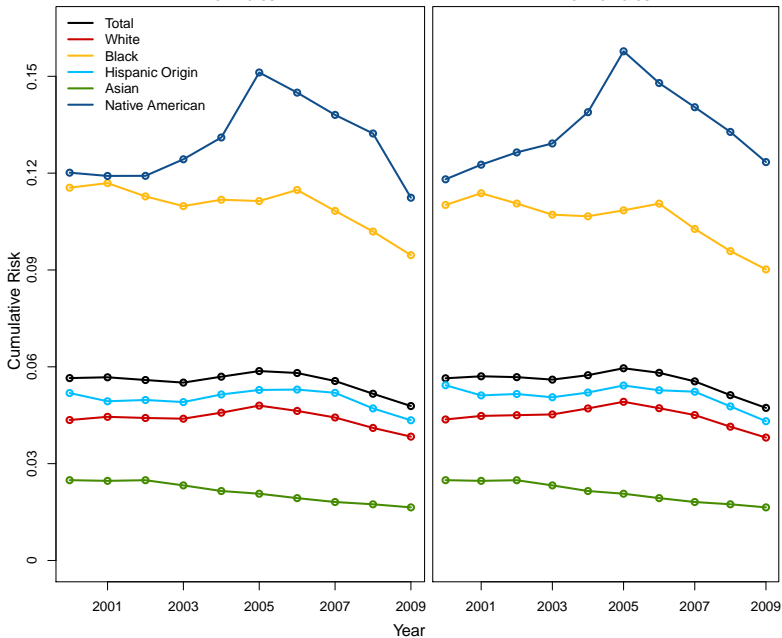
For Females



Cumulative Risk of Foster Care Placement by Age 18

For Males

For Females



7. Conclusions

From annual prevalence to cumulative prevalence

- ▶ Annual prevalences are low, making inattention reasonable.
- ▶ Yet cumulative risks are high, making child maltreatment and foster care placement salient factors shaping child health.
 - For that to be the case, at least one would have to have synergistic effects. (I think it is hard to argue neither will.)

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May also shape child health disparities

- ▶ Racial/ethnic disparities in these risks are shockingly high.
 - ▶ 25 percent of Black children and 10 percent of white children will ever experience confined maltreatment, for instance.
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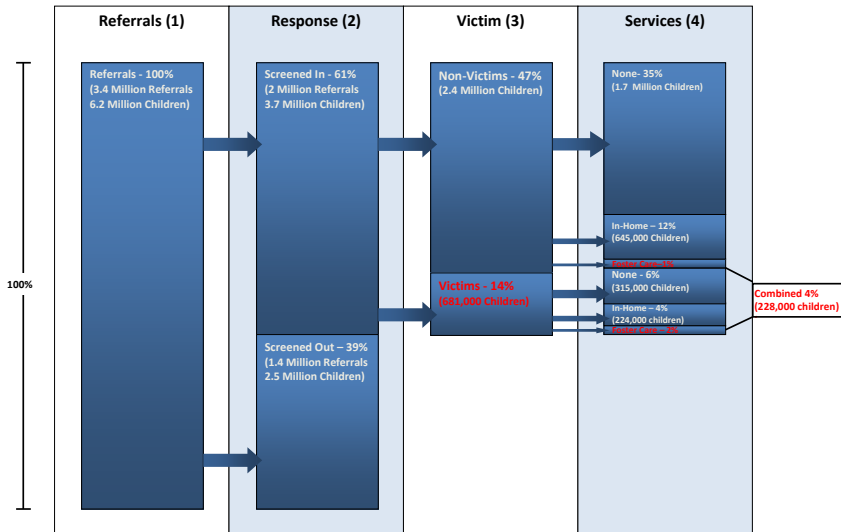
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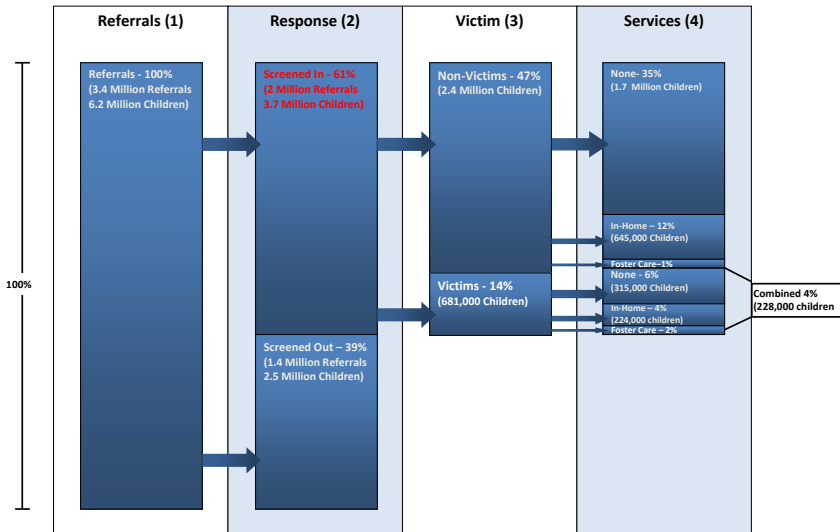
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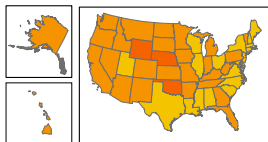
8. The two next steps



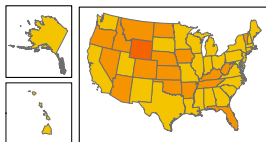


Cumulative Risk of Foster Care Placement by Age 18

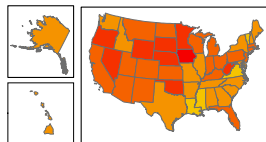
2005



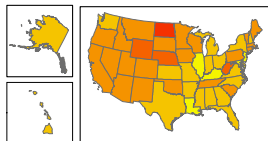
Total



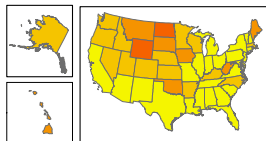
White



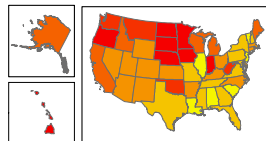
Black



Hispanic Origin



Asian



Native American

Cumulative Percentage Experiencing Placement



0-2

2-6

6-12

12-20

20-30

30+

9. Thanks so much for your time