

Research Analyzing Adult Protective Services Data: What Does It Tell Us?

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Workshop Overview

- Rationale for reviewing APS-related research
- Methodology used
- Overview of findings
- Implications for researchers
- Implications for APS
- Health care needs of APS clients

Rationale

- APS cases are complex, interventions are potentially life-changing
- Yet, body of research involving APS agencies, clients, data, and resources not systematically examined



Goals of review

- Analyze research using APS case data
- Assess state of knowledge regarding evidence-based APS practice
- Recommend areas for further study

Methodology

- Narrative review
- Identified published studies, 1996-2011, through MEDLINE and Clearinghouse on Abuse and Neglect of the Elderly that met inclusion criteria (next slide)
- 50 studies met criteria
- Categorized studies according to essential research questions

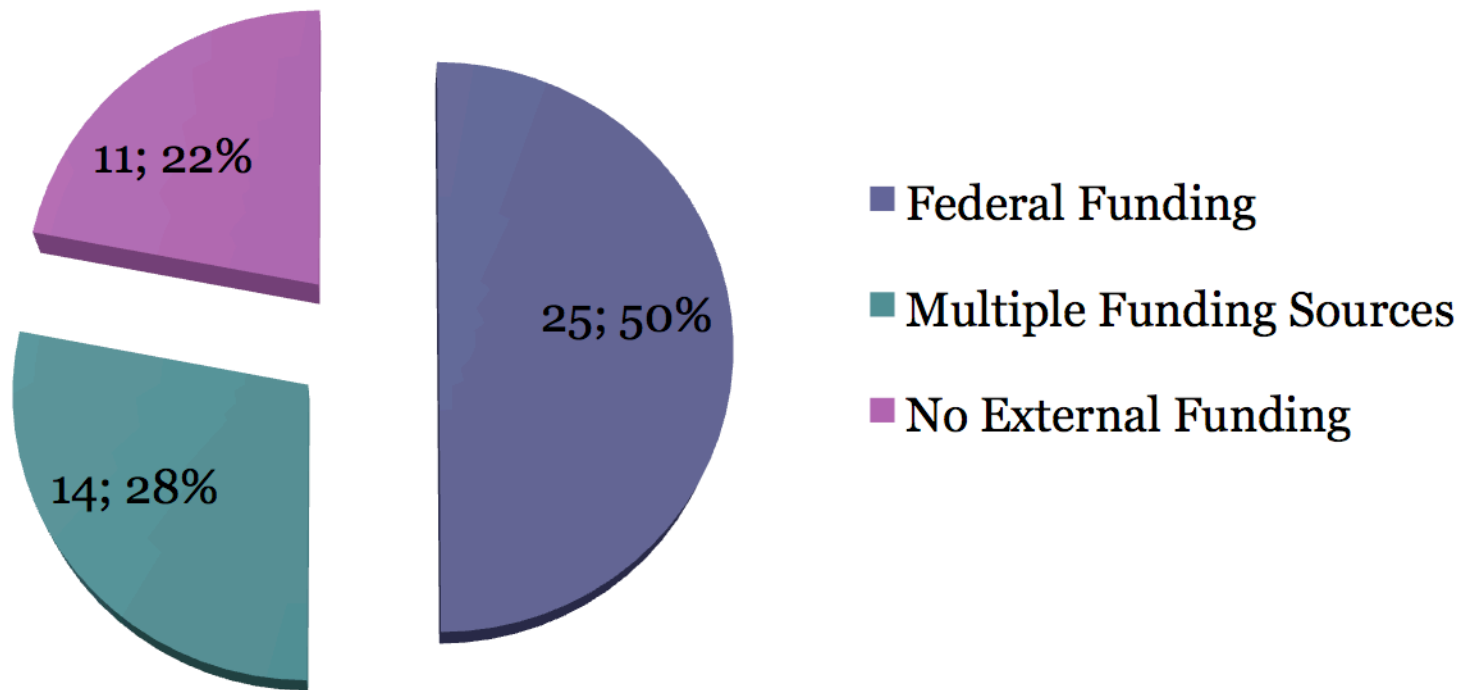
Inclusion criteria:

- Focused on maltreatment of vulnerable adults
- Identified at least one hypothesis to be tested or readers could discern hypothesis
- Used APS clients, data, personnel, or resources to test their hypotheses
- Described systematic method for data acquisition
- Used valid statistical approach
- Conducted in United States

Findings

- 50 studies met inclusion criteria
- Studies categorized by essential questions
- Some studies placed in more than one category

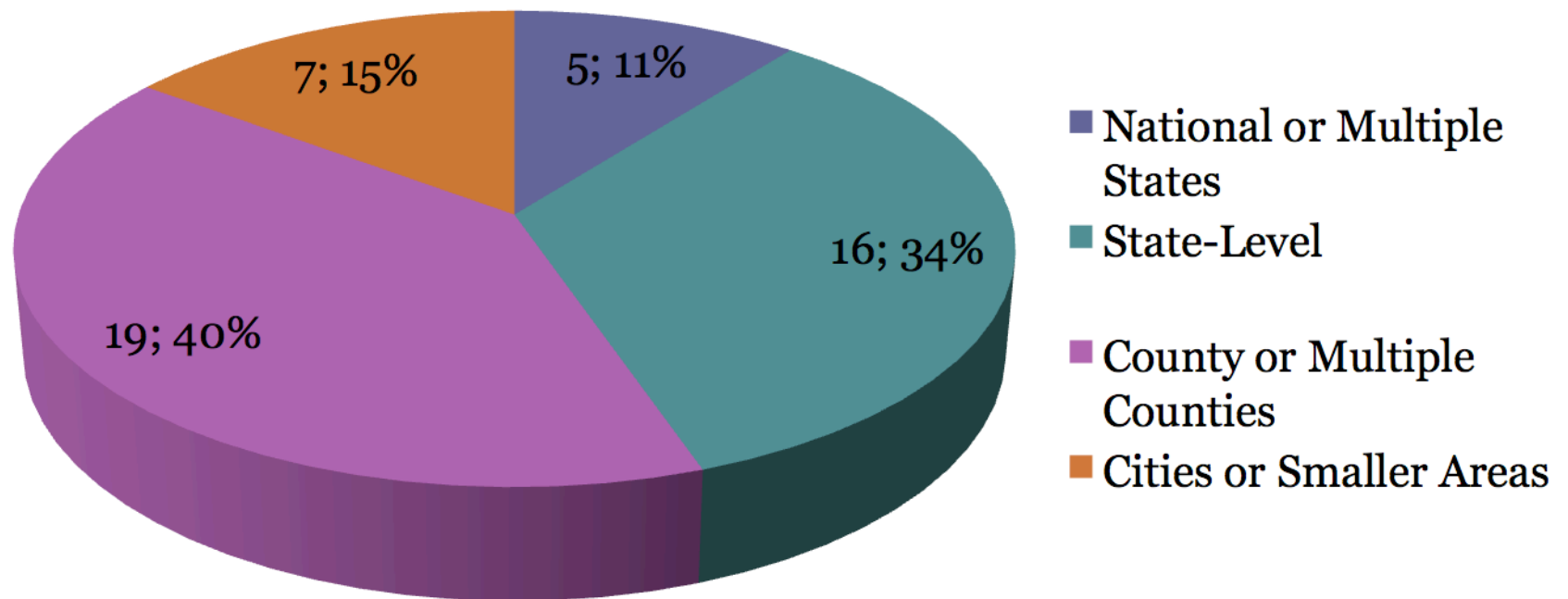
External Funding



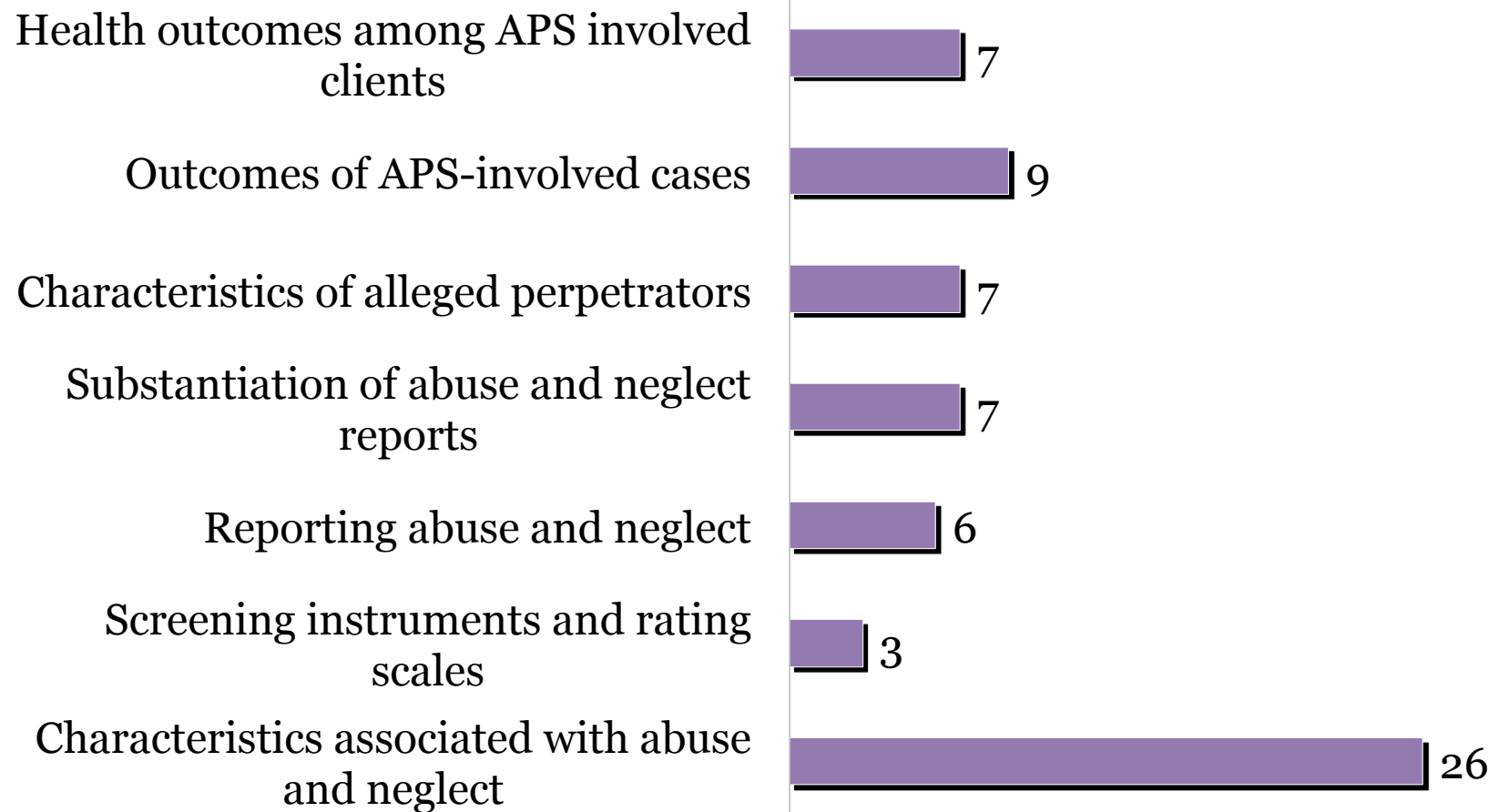
Study design

- 17 used a non-APS control or comparison group
- 8 studies used a longitudinal design

Geographic Areas Studied



Overview of study categories



Characteristics associated with abuse and neglect

- 26 studies; 14 focused on specific type of elder mistreatment
- Majority were cross-sectional, correlational studies
- Characteristics studied:
 - Demographics (Race, ethnicity, gender, age, geographic location, socioeconomic status)
 - Social isolation
 - Cognitive impairment
 - Activities of daily living
 - Service refusal

Screening instruments and rating scales

- 3 studies to assess usefulness of structured instruments
- Kohlman evaluation of living skills
- Psychological maltreatment assessment instrument
- Framework for understanding financial exploitation

Reporting abuse and neglect

- 6 studies
- Risk factors for referral
- Societal and service factors related to reporting
- Trends in reporting over time
- Reporting among health care professionals

Substantiation of abuse and neglect reports

- 7 studies
- Three research teams
- Social and service factors related to substantiation
- Prospective study of alleged sexual abuse cases

Characteristics of alleged perpetrators

- 7 studies
- Characteristics of sexual perpetrators
- Comparison of APs in reported cases in Illinois
 - By race
 - By urban/rural location
 - By substance abuse status

Outcomes of APS involved cases

- 9 studies
- Interventions received
- Service refusal patterns
- Criminal justice outcomes in SA studies

Health outcomes

- 7 studies
- Mortality
- Nursing home placement
- Health care utilization

Recommendations

What is needed to accomplish
research critical to evidence-based
APS Practice?

Practitioner-Researcher Partnerships

NAPSA/NCPEA Research Committee has developed principles and practical guidelines for these partnerships.

Public and Private Funding

Federal funding is particularly key to address the national problem of elder abuse and unmet victim needs.

Researchers Must Be

- Committed to improving conditions for victims and remedying social problems
- Willing to learn from APS, mindful of the challenges under which APS functions

Openness to Scrutiny

APS agencies, administrators, and workers must be willing to open policies and practices to research scrutiny

Research Ethics

- Protections for victim/client/subject confidentiality and safety needed
- Must be mutually developed by researchers and APS and overseen by IRB

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Client Participation Needed To

- Provide informed consent for their de-identified data to be used
- Provide consumer satisfaction feedback if requested

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CAUTION!

Read carefully before using!
**Basic questions to ask when
applying research to practice**

Evaluating and Applying Research

- Is it relevant to a problem you want to solve or study?
- Is the sample size adequate to draw major conclusions?
- Are the sample characteristics, location and outcomes relevant to the population you serve?
- How generalizable are the findings?
- And more....see Research Committee document on this topic at NAPSA and NCPEA websites.

A Sampling of Research Findings Focused on Self-Neglect

- The most common allegation in APS reports
- Fraught with ethical dilemmas
- What have we learned that could impact your practice?

Characteristics

- Milwaukee Co. study: 20% self-neglect clients were demented, while 26% demented in other abuse categories. So, dementia may be less likely than in other cases, at least in 2011 in Milwaukee.
- Maryland suburban county study: self-neglect cases often open more than 60 days when environmental risks, physical and mental incapacity are significant, so do not be surprised it takes so long.

High Risk Variables

- Self-neglect combined with alcohol abuse is more likely to lead to recidivism than self-neglect + social isolation. Is the drinker seen by more people and a worry to them?
- With self-neglecters, check on high risk variables: poor nutrition, depression, difficulty with IADL's, decisional capacity, toileting and transferring, all more problematic than for other APS clients.

MORTALITY

- Self-neglect leads to increased risk of death.
- Contradictory results as to whether harm by others is a greater risk (Dr. Lachs in New Haven) or self-neglect is greater risk than caregiver harm (Dr. Dong in Chicago), but risk of lethality is clear.
- That risk of death is greater for blacks than for whites (Dr. Dong)

ASSESSMENTS

- Tests of Executive Functioning are more predictive of self-neglect than tests of memory and orientation. Do not accept standard memory tests alone in assessments.
- Seek tests such as Kohlman Evaluation of Living Skills (KELS) that can detect with high reliability executive functioning and the capacity to live safely and independently.

Research can inform practice

- Alert you to relevant risks and conditions
- Add significance to the investigation outcome.
- Direct you to useful assessment tools.
- Affirm that self-neglect cases: can take a long time, have high recidivism and strong likelihood the client is competent, possibly depressed and addicted to alcohol, with poor executive functioning, among other issues.

Resources

- Guiding Principles for Evaluating and Applying Research
 - http://www.napsa-now.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/NAPSA_NCPEA_GUIDELINES_FOR_EVALUATING_AND_APPLYING_RESEARCH-2.pdf