An Examination of the Relationship Between Child Maltreatment and Teenage Parenthood Using Official Data from a High-risk Sample

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N=434

Any maltreatment birth to 12: 1.56 (1.44) 1.40 (1.28) 1.47 (1.39)

Sexual abuse birth to 12: 1.07 (1.32) 1.08 (1.31) 1.05 (1.32) 1.07 (1.32) 1.07 (1.32)

Black*: 1.38 (4.4) 1.23 (4.0) 1.36 (4.3) 1.21 (4.0) 1.39 (4.4) 1.25 (4.1) 1.41 (4.6) 1.27 (4.2)

Hispanic*: 0.91 (1.52) 0.83 (1.49) 0.92 (1.54) 0.83 (1.49) 0.87 (1.50) 0.81 (1.48) 0.91 (1.53) 0.83 (1.49)

Other race/ethnicity*: 1.65 (6.5) 1.61 (6.4) 1.68 (6.6) 1.61 (6.5) 1.61 (6.4) 1.58 (6.3) 1.64 (6.5) 1.59 (6.4)

Family structure*: 0.98 (3.2) 0.97 (3.2) 0.96 (3.2) 0.97 (3.2) 0.97 (3.2) 0.96 (3.2) 0.97 (3.2) 0.97 (3.2)

Low household income*: 1.56 (4.4) 1.57 (4.4) 1.54 (4.4) 1.56 (4.4) 1.56 (4.4) 1.54 (4.4)

Early sexual experience*: 2.20 (7.4)** 2.21 (7.6)** 2.23 (7.4)** 2.21 (7.6)** 2.23 (7.4)** 2.21 (7.6)** 2.23 (7.4)** 2.21 (7.6)**

Teen pregnancy: Youth self-report at age 18-“Have you ever been pregnant? P” (yes or no)

Methods:

• The current study is a secondary analysis of the Longitudinal Studies of Child Abuse and Neglect (LSSCAN) Consortium data. Participants were considered "at risk" for abuse at baseline because of demographic and social characteristics or prior maltreatment. Participants and their caregivers were assessed every two years from age four to age 18, and resided in five U.S. cities.

• The sample is comprised of 697 females. Analyses were completed using logistic regression, as the outcome measure for teenage pregnancy is dichotomous.

• To retain missing cases for study analyses, Multiply Imputed Chained Equations (MICE) were used to generate 20 imputed data sets. Results of the current study’s analyses represent pooled estimates from these data sets.

o Dependent measure

• Teen pregnancy: Youth self-report at age 18-“Have you ever been pregnant?” (yes or no)

• Primary independent measures (all maltreatment measures are based on official maltreatment allegations)

• Maltreatment: Experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual maltreatment between birth and age 12 (yes or no)

• Physical abuse: Experienced at least one incident of physical abuse between birth and age 12 (yes or no)

• Sexual abuse: Experienced at least one incident of sexual abuse between birth and age 12 (yes or no)

• Control measures: Age, race/ethnicity, income, family structure, early sexual experiences (youth self-report of engaging in sexual intercourse before age 14)

Discussion:

• Results of the current project are consistent with previous studies that have found a significant relationship between maltreatment and teen pregnancy (Noll et al., 2009; Noll et al., 2018). This inconsistency might be due to differences in the operationalization of study measures and the study sample.

• Consistent with findings of past research, early sexual experience is significantly related to teenage pregnancy among individuals in the study sample.

Limitations/Future Directions:

• Use of official data may underestimate prevalence of maltreatment

• Survey data did not inquire as to whether pregnancy resulted in a live birth or whether the offspring resided with the teenager mother if a live birth resulted

• Future studies should continue to examine the relationship between maltreatment and subsequent teen pregnancy using prospective data from diverse samples

Acknowledgements:

This research was funded by a Student-Faculty Research Collaboration Grant from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire’s Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.