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INTRODUCTION

Child neglect is the most common type of child maltreatment and the type most frequently associated with child fatality.¹ Although neglected children typically endure multiple types of neglect (e.g., physical, emotional, educational, medical) and other forms of abuse during a single maltreatment incident,^{2,3} prior studies on neglect phenomenology and associated risk factors have primarily examined neglect types in isolation.

Objectives

- To advance understanding of the phenomenology of neglect incidents that more closely match the experiences of neglected children, we examined latent classes of neglect defined by co-occurring incident characteristics, including multiple neglect types and other forms of abuse
- To inform efforts to identify families at-risk for particular classes of neglect, we also examined associations between potential risk factors and latent classes of neglect

METHOD

Sample

- Case records for 390 substantiated neglect incidents involving children of U.S. Army service members

Procedure

- Neglect types and subtypes (x-axis, Figure 1) and incident severity were classified using the Modified Maltreatment Classification System⁴
- Neglect incident characteristics (i.e., incident-related offender and victim substance use) and risk factors were coded using information drawn from case records

Statistical Analysis

- Latent class analysis (LCA) was used to examine patterns of co-occurring incident characteristics
- Multinomial logistic regressions were used to examine associations between potential risk factors and latent classes of neglect

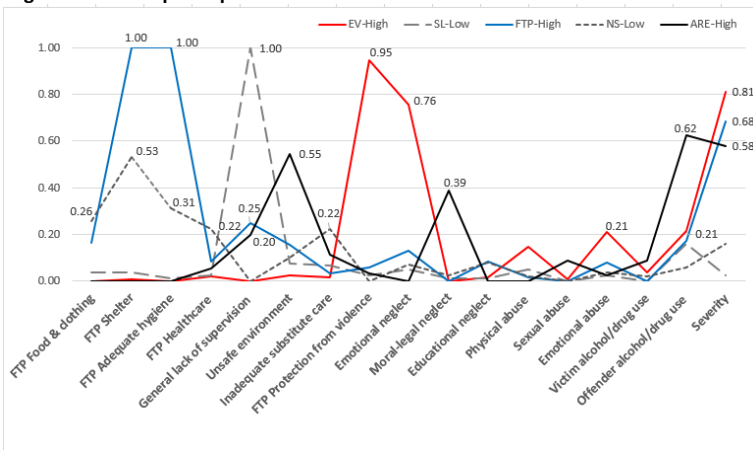
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RESULTS

LCA yielded 5 classes.

- Exposure to violence-high severity (EV-high)** – high probability of failure to protect from violence, emotional neglect, and high severity (35.89%)
- Supervisory lapses-low severity (LS-low)** – moderate probabilities of general lack of supervision and unsafe environment, as well as low severity (22.05%)
- Failure to provide-high severity (FTP-high)** – high probability of failure to provide shelter and hygiene, as well as high severity (18.72%)
- Non-specific-low severity (NS-low)** – moderate probabilities of failure to provide food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, and healthcare; as well as low severity (12.05%)
- Alcohol-related endangerment-high severity (ARE-high)** – high probabilities of offender alcohol/drug use during the incident and moral-legal neglect, as well as high severity (11.28%)

Figure 1. Item response probabilities for latent class indicators for each latent class



Note. Item response probabilities $\geq .20$ are shown. FTP, Failure to provide. $n = 390$

RESULTS (CONTINUED)

Risk Factors Associated with Increased Likelihood of Class Membership

- EV-high** was associated with *parental isolation* (vs. class 5, OR=4.06), *prior child maltreatment* (vs. class 5, OR=3.34), *spouse abuse* (vs. classes 2-5, ORs \geq 7.53), and *family conflict* (vs. classes 2-5, ORs \geq 2.68)
- LS-low** was associated with *prior child maltreatment* (vs. class 5, OR=3.69), *childcare problems* (vs. class 1, OR=4.59), *current deployment* (vs. class 1, OR=10.07), *family stress* (vs. class 4, OR=2.52), and *family mental health problems* (vs. class 1, OR=4.36)
- FTP-high** was associated with *poor knowledge of child-rearing practices* (vs. class 1, OR=2.62), *prior child maltreatment* (vs. classes 4-5, ORs \geq 5.24), *current deployment* (vs. all classes, ORs \geq 4.95), and *family mental health problems* (vs. class 1, OR=4.67)
- NS-low** was associated with *poor knowledge of child-rearing practices* (vs. class 1, OR=2.68), *current deployment* (vs. class 1, OR=6.21), and *family mental health problems* (vs. class 1, OR=5.00)
- ARE-high** was associated with *parental history of substance use* (vs. all classes, ORs \geq 3.44)

CONCLUSION

- High and low severity classes were associated with relatively distinct risk factors, which underscores the importance of tailored prevention strategies
- High severity classes were associated with risk factors that are likely to draw the attention of law enforcement or child protective services (e.g., family conflict, prior maltreatment)
- Authorities should incorporate assessments of high-severity neglect risk factors into existing screening protocols to identify families at risk of severe child neglect

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