

Rockwool-Duke Global Child Welfare Database

NDACAN Dataset Number 271 USER'S GUIDE



National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect

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Table of Contents

Rockwool-Duke Global Child Welfare Database.....	1
Preface.....	5
Acknowledgement of Source.....	5
Publication Submission Requirement.....	5
Abstract.....	6
Study Overview	7
Study Identification.....	7
Purpose of the Study	7
Study Design.....	7
Date(s) of Data Collection	7
Geographic Area	7
Unit of Observation.....	8
Sample.....	8
Data Collection Procedures.....	8
Response Rates	8
Sources of Information	8
Type of Data Collected.....	8
Related Publications and Final Reports	8
Analytic Considerations.....	9
Confidentiality Protection.....	10
Extent of Collection	10
Extent of Processing	10
Data File Information.....	11
File Specifications.....	11
Acronyms & Abbreviations	11

Preface

The data for the *Rockwool–Duke Global Child Welfare Database* have been given by the authors to the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN) for public distribution. The data were either collected by the authors from publicly available sources, or compiled by the authors from restricted data and reported in aggregate form, preventing disclosure risk. Funding for the project was provided by grants from the Rockwool Foundation (grant no. 1241) (AR, LB, PF, CW) and FORTE—the Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare (grant no. 2016-07099) (PF). The research was carried out in complete independence of the funding sources, and the authors accept responsibility for the data.

Acknowledgement of Source

Authors should acknowledge the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN) and the original collector(s) of the data when publishing manuscripts that use data provided by the Archive. Users of these data are urged to follow some adaptation of the statement below.

The data used in this publication were made available by the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, and have been used with permission. The data were either collected by the authors from publicly available sources, or compiled by the authors from restricted data and reported in aggregate form, preventing disclosure risk. Funding for the project was provided by grants from the Rockwool Foundation and FORTE—the Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare. The collector(s) and distributors of the original data, the funder(s), NDACAN, Cornell University and their agents or employees bear no responsibility for the analyses or interpretations presented here.

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Publication Submission Requirement

In accordance with the terms of the *Data License* for this dataset, users of these data are required to notify the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect of any published work or report based wholly or in part on these data. A copy of any completed manuscript, thesis abstract, or reprint should be emailed to NDACANSupport@cornell.edu. Such copies will be used to provide our funding agency with essential information about the use of NDACAN resources and to facilitate the exchange of information about research activities among data users and contributors.

Abstract

The Rockwool–Duke Global Child Welfare Database (RDGCWD) compiles cross-national aggregate information from the Global North about children who experienced contact with child welfare systems (CWS) or child protective services (CPS) between 2000 and 2020. Data were collected from national child welfare agencies or national or transnational statistical agencies, and include measures of child maltreatment investigations, confirmed child maltreatment, and children in out-of-home care. Population data are included for the measurement of incidence and prevalence of system contact. The RDGCWD provides a unique resource for comparative and longitudinal research on child maltreatment and child welfare systems. However, potential unobserved variation in the definition of child maltreatment or in the administration of child welfare and child protection warrant caution in the interpretation of variation and change in system contact. Users are therefore strongly encouraged to read the User Guide carefully before using the data.

Study Overview

Study Identification

Rockwool–Duke Global Child Welfare Database

Investigator(s):

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Award Number(s):

Grant No. 1241 (Rockwool); grant no. 2016-07099 (FORTE)

Purpose of the Study

Research objectives for the study:

- Understand cross-national variation in child welfare system (CWS) and child protective services (CPS) contact in the Global North,
- Understand twenty-first century trends in CWS/CPS contact,
- Develop a data resource to support comparative child welfare research.

Study Design

This was a compilation of administrative data.

Date(s) of Data Collection

2000–2020

Geographic Area

Albania, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, England, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greenland, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Montenegro, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia, Scotland, Singapore, Slovakia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Tajikistan, Turkey, United States, Uzbekistan, Wales

Unit of Observation

Country–year. The constituent countries of the United Kingdom (i.e. England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales) and Greenland are referred to as countries.

Sample

Child maltreatment investigations; investigations resulting in the confirmation of child maltreatment; and children in out-of-home care.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection occurred between August 2021 and May 2022. The principal sources of data were tabulated data files and statistical reports published by national statistical agencies and national child welfare agencies, accessed through agency websites or national databases. If data were not publicly available, the authors accessed data directly from relevant agencies. If no data could be accessed through national agencies, data from UNICEF’s TransMonEE database and the Nordic Health and Welfare Statistics database were used.

Response Rates

The authors sought data from 64 countries in the Global North for the years 2000–2020 and obtained data on at least one outcome from 44 countries. Of 1,344 possible country–year observations for any given outcome, we obtained 104 observations of child welfare system (CWS) and/or child protective services (CPS) investigations, 194 observations of CWS/CPS confirmations of maltreatment, 288 observations of children entering out-of-home care, and 402 observations of children residing in out-of-home care at a point in time.

Sources of Information

National and transnational child welfare and statistical agencies.

Type of Data Collected

Administrative data.

Related Publications and Final Reports

Wildeman, C., Roehrkasse, A.F., Becker, L., & Fallesen, P. (2022).

“Child Welfare System Contact in the Global North: Trends from 44 Countries.” Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4139385> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4139385>

Users are strongly encouraged to review published works, based upon these data, before doing analyses. To view a complete list of publications for this dataset, please visit our online citations collection called “canDL” (Child Abuse and Neglect Digital Library): <https://www.ndacan.acf.hhs.gov/candl/candl.cfm>.

Analytic Considerations

The Rockwool–Duke Global Child Welfare Database (RDGCWD) provides a basis for both cross-sectional and longitudinal comparative analysis of CWS/CPS contact. However, the data have significant limitations that users are strongly urged to consider before conducting analyses.

Limitations of the data:

- *Reliability*: There are several issues that limit the reliability of RDGCWD data. Users should consider carefully which issues are pertinent to their analytic goals, whether making comparisons across countries, within countries across years, or by linking RDGCWD data to other sources. Users are strongly encouraged to review detailed analyses of RDGCWD reliability listed in the Related Publications and Reports section.
 - Miscellaneous known challenges to reliability:
 - Countries vary in the 12-month periods over which investigations, confirmed maltreatments, and entrances into out-of-home care were measured and the dates on which children residing in out-of-home care were measured.
 - Except for Canada, all children analyzed in RDGCWD are aged less than 18 years. Canadian data include only children aged less than 16 years. Unborn children are excluded from analysis.
 - Data for investigations and confirmed maltreatments in the United States (US) come from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data Series (NCANDS). A small number of states did not report data to NCANDS through 2011. As a result, the geographic range of US investigations and confirmed maltreatment varies across years between 2005 and 2011 and differs from the geographic range of out-of-home care measures in those years. Population data included in RDGCWD are adjusted to account for this issue.
- *Definitional variation*: Based on the authors’ analysis of underlying data, some countries appear to have used varying definitions of child maltreatment investigations, confirmed maltreatment, or out-of-home care. When possible, the authors have combined or differenced relevant populations to achieve consistent measures of child welfare system contact, such as adding children in different out-of-home care settings or subtracting children 18 or older. In some cases, however, the authors have suppressed values that are implausibly low or high, indicating unobserved definitional variation or other sources of error in data reporting.

- *Missing data:* The sampling frame for the RDGCWD was 64 countries in the Global North. Data on at least one measure of system contact were collected from 44 countries, but many measures were observed irregularly or were not observed. As a result, systematic inferences cannot be made from the sample. The authors' inability to access data may have been systematically related to levels of child maltreatment or CWS/CPS contact. In this case the sample may lead to biased inferences about the Global North. Countries in the Global North are characterized by a wide range of per-capita income levels and levels of social support, and so general conclusions cannot be drawn about high-income countries or countries with well-developed welfare states.

Confidentiality Protection

The dataset underwent a confidentiality review by NDACAN and it was determined that no recodes were necessary since data are aggregated at national levels. There are no primary or secondary identifiers in the dataset.

Extent of Collection

This dataset contains a User's Guide, Codebook, and a dataset named "DS271_RDGCWD" in file formats native to Excel (.xlsx), R (.RData), SPSS (.sav), Stata (.dta), and SAS (.sas7bdat). There are also import program files for SAS (.sas), SPSS (.sps), and Stata (.do) to read in the text (.dat) data file, and comma-delimited (.csv) data file for use with spreadsheet programs.

Note that data are collected from international sources. Some values for some metadata variables (Variables 15-41), particularly variables containing hyperlinks to data sources, include non-standard English characters (e.g. Korean, Cyrillic). These data could not be formatted in SAS, CSV, or text files, and so data in these formats contain incorrectly encoded metadata values. Original and correct formats are retained in the following formats: Excel, R, SPSS, and Stata. Users seeking metadata information, particularly hyperlinks to data sources, are therefore encouraged to use these formats if possible.

Extent of Processing

The data contributor conducted all data recodes and deletions prior to depositing the data with NDACAN. NDACAN created the User's Guide, Codebook, and data files formatted for SAS, SPSS, Stata, and a text and a comma-delimited data file

The contributors suppressed values reported in data sources that were noted to be unreliable. When multiple sources of data were discrepant, the authors investigated further to determine the correct figure, or removed data when a reliable figure could not be established. Some values reported in the dataset are arithmetically derived from values reported in the data sources, for example, by subtracting children 18 and older from the total of all children experiencing CWS/CPS contact.

Data File Information

File Specifications

This dataset contains one data file containing 510 observations (rows) of 41 variables (columns).

Acronyms & Abbreviations

The following abbreviations and acronyms are used in this document:

CPS - Child Protective Services

CWS - Child Welfare System

RDGCWD - Rockwool–Duke Global Child Welfare Database

NCANDS - National Child Abuse and Neglect Data Series

NDACAN - National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect

UNICEF - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

US - United States

TransMonEE Database - The Transformative Monitoring for Enhanced Equity Database

Technical support for this dataset is provided by NDACAN.

Please send your inquiries to NDACANsupport@cornell.edu