"MISSING" DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS IN WELFARE CASELOADS:

THE DISCREPANCY BETWEEN SURVEY AND ADMINISTRATIVE DISCLOSURE RATES

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Executive Summary

This paper follows a report series entitled, "Domestic Violence and Welfare Receipt," completed last year by the Family Welfare Research and Training Group of the University of Maryland School of Social Work. The series, comprised of three reports, examined the implementation of the Family Violence Option (FVO) in Maryland and the outcomes of the individuals participating in Maryland's FVO. This paper expands our approach to the question of domestic violence and cash assistance in that it also considers those individuals who choose not to disclose abuse to their welfare caseworkers and thus do not participate in the Option.

Using survey and administrative data on a sample of June 2002 Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) recipients, this paper compares characteristics of individuals who disclosed domestic violence to survey researchers to the profile of those who also or only disclosed to their welfare caseworkers. Women who did not disclose domestic violence to either are included as a comparison group. The specific aim was to ascertain any characteristics common to welfare recipients who experience domestic violence but do not disclose the abuse to their welfare caseworker in order to determine if this group differs from victims who do disclose to caseworkers. Identification of these "risk" characteristics could aid in designing improvements to domestic violence screening methods in welfare offices.

- **A much larger proportion of sample members disclosed abuse to the survey researchers than to their welfare caseworkers.**

According to self-report during telephone surveys, recent domestic violence is a common issue faced by welfare recipients. Almost one in five respondents (18.8%, 148/787) said she had experienced domestic violence in the year prior to the survey.

However, the administrative welfare data portrays a very different picture; only 1.7% (13/787) of survey respondents had an administrative marker in the automated system in the year prior to the survey. Only six women who disclosed domestic violence in the survey were also marked for domestic violence in the administrative data (0.8% of the total sample). Conversely and unexpectedly, seven women (0.9% of the total sample) had disclosed to their welfare caseworker, but not to the surveyor. Possible explanations include a personal mistrust of surveys or a discomfort with sharing personal information over the telephone. Also, it is possible that the abuse might have occurred more than one year ago, but the administrative data still reflected eligibility for an exemption during the previous year.

According to the data, there are some important demographic differences that indicate a variety of sub-groups of "missing" victims, rather than one particular profile or a typical hard-to-identify victim, exist:

- **Differences among the groups in age and race were large and statistically significant, indicating that they may be possible risk factors for not disclosing domestic violence or being missed by current FVO screening practices.**

- **Although identified differences were not statistically significant, marital status and education also may be risk factors.**

More than four out of five (82.8%) women in the survey disclosers group who were not marked in the welfare data are African American. This compares to only half of the women in the group of administratively marked survey disclosers. Also, survey disclosers that were not administratively marked were significantly younger. While women under the age of 25 are underrepresented in the administratively marked survey

discloser group (12.5%), they do make up a large proportion (43.7%) of the survey discloser group.

Similarly, although not statistically significant, there is at least a hint in the data that marital status and education level may also be relevant. Separated and divorced women were more numerous in the administrative data than among survey disclosers, raising concerns that a number of never-married women are not revealing domestic violence to their caseworkers or being recognized as victims. Also, less than a third of the two administrative groups (12.5% and 30.4%) had less than a high school education, although almost half (43.8%) of survey disclosers had less than a high school education.

Beyond finding demographic subgroups of missing victims, it is heartening that victims who disclosed to survey researchers and not to their caseworker did not have significantly more employment barriers than those who were marked in the administrative data:

- **Survey disclosers reported fewer personal and family challenges and fewer logistical and situational challenges than those in the administratively marked survey disclosers group.**

- **Considering human capital deficits however, both the non-victim and survey disclosers groups presented more barriers than either of the administratively marked groups.**

Personal and family challenges included barriers such as physical and mental health issues, chemical dependency, and having a criminal record. Logistical and situational challenges dealt with transportation, childcare, and housing issues. In both of these categories, victims who were identified in the administrative data had the most

challenges. However, women with less education and work experience were more common among the survey group than among those marked in the administrative data.

In contrast to past theories, we conclude that FVO screening practices have differing effects on different types of women. In short, these findings suggest that current frontline practices may not be adequate in screening, identifying, or recording domestic violence among African Americans and younger women, and perhaps never-married women and those with less education as well. These groups are at least as likely to experience domestic violence, and are disclosing the abuse to survey researchers, indicating that they may be disproportionately slipping through the cracks of a well-intentioned, potentially very effective policy. Whether due to a reluctance to disclose, insufficient or inappropriate screening methods, or both, this reality suggests that the FVO in Maryland and perhaps elsewhere may not have been utilized by or assisted as many women as could have potentially benefited from the exemptions and service referrals it makes available.

Introduction

Theoretical approaches and anecdotal accounts suggest that domestic violence

is a substantial barrier for many welfare recipients in achieving self-sufficiency, and

empirical research surveys have shown a high incidence of domestic violence among

cash assistance recipients (See, for example, Tolman and Raphael, 2000). However,

preliminary studies of welfare program administrative data indicate that very few women

have disclosed domestic violence to welfare caseworkers (Lennert, 1997; Raphael and

Haennicke, 1999). The discrepancy between disclosures to researchers and domestic

violence advocates versus those to welfare caseworkers is troubling because the

purpose of PRWORA's Family Violence Option (FVO) is to ensure that abuse victims

are not harmed by work, child support or time limit requirements associated with welfare

reform. Thus it is imperative that front-line welfare staff be able to identify the

population that is potentially eligible to be served.

Our past Maryland research on domestic violence and Temporary Cash

Assistance (TCA) receipt, like similar studies completed in other states, unfortunately,

was not able to close the disclosure gap, identify why it exists, or end the debate.

Between March 1998 and June 2000, to illustrate, 0.66% of Maryland TCA cases were

administratively marked as abuse victims and another 5.12% disclosed abuse but were

not recorded as having done so in the automated system (Hetling-Wernyj and Born,

2002). However, according to survey results from our federally funded study of the

June 2002 active TCA caseload, 46.4% of Maryland TCA recipients said they had

experienced violence or been threatened by a partner (Ovwigho, Born, Ferrero, and

Palazzo, 2004). Even using a narrower definition of domestic abuse, the discrepancy

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between our survey data and administrative data remains large; 18.8% reported physical violence in the past year, more than three times the proportion identified using administrative data.

This paper examines the characteristics of the sample of Maryland welfare recipients from June 2002 who, during a telephone survey, disclosed domestic violence to the research interviewer. Using administrative records of the sample members, this project compares demographic characteristics and reported barriers of three groups of women: individuals who disclosed domestic violence to the survey researchers; those who also disclosed to their caseworkers; and those who disclosed to their caseworker but not to surveyors. Those who did not disclose domestic violence to either are included as a comparison group. The purpose of the analyses was to decipher whom welfare caseworkers are reaching and assist in identifying possible sub-groups of "missing" victims. In other words, the specific aim was to ascertain any characteristics common to welfare recipients who have experienced domestic violence but do not disclose the abuse to their welfare caseworker in order to determine if this group differs from victims who do disclose to caseworkers. Identification of these "risk" characteristics could aid in designing improvements to domestic violence screening methods in welfare offices and, ultimately, in helping to insure that the full promise of the Family Violence Option in particular and welfare reform in general is realized for women who have experienced domestic violence.

Background

  The discrepancy between the prevalence of domestic violence among welfare recipients and the rate at which victims disclose to caseworkers and use FVO waivers has led to a debate among advocates and policymakers on why the difference exists. Certain groups, such as the Women's Freedom Network, argue that so few women are taking advantage of the Option because the numbers of victims who need services are low and in fact may include individuals who are only claiming to be victims in order to continue receiving assistance (Sarnoff, 1999). Other groups, such as the National Organization for Women, say that screening and notification practices are flawed and the policy cannot reach those women in severe crisis or those still living with their abusers (NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund, 2002). However, both arguments are based on assumptions about how most women would react if experiencing domestic violence, and both are selective in the particular psychological theories used to support their point of view. In reality, the situation is probably more complex than either polar view makes it appear.

  The difference is more likely attributable to the experience and knowledge of the interviewer and certain considerations and choices made by the victims. On one hand, welfare caseworkers may not be as well trained or sophisticated in case management and clinical work as domestic violence advocates or other counselors or as knowledgeable of interviewing and probing techniques as survey researchers (Bane and Ellwood, 1994). In addition, caseworkers may not consider screening for domestic violence part of their job responsibilities, or may be skeptical of recipients who claim to be victims of domestic violence but have not taken any independent action to improve

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their situation (Hagen and Owens-Manley, 2002). On the other hand, issues of confidentiality and necessity may compromise victims' willingness to disclose in the welfare office, but not in an anonymous survey that may help in policy development. Especially when past sanctions have taken place, researchers found that disconnection between a welfare recipient and her caseworker can adversely affect the kind of support she receives as a domestic violence victim (Sanders and Rainford, 2003). In fact, participants in one study doubted that anyone would use the Family Violence Option because of distrust of caseworkers and the confidentiality provisions of the FVO (Ponder and Kinnevy, 2003).

Research in medical settings has found other barriers to effective domestic violence screening related to the comfort level of the screener in asking direct questions or providing adequate referrals. For example, it was found among emergency room nurses and personnel that the most common barriers to screening for domestic violence were a lack of effective interventions, lack of provider education, and lack of time (Salber and McCaw, 2000). In another study, hospital nurses who participated in a pilot universal screening program for domestic violence found that the most challenging barrier was providing effective and appropriate referrals. Due to lack of education related to domestic violence and a lack of comfort in dealing with the issue, many nurses found the referral process difficult and time-consuming (Davis and Harsh, 2001).

Neither research on mistrust between welfare caseworkers and their clients, nor studies involving the lack of knowledge and capabilities of screeners examine or even consider that barriers to disclosure might be experienced or perceived differently by distinct groups of women. There have been no completed studies that investigate the

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demographic characteristics of women who disclose domestic violence to service providers in comparison to the characteristics of women who have disclosed to researchers. This paper uses both administrative and survey data to determine if there are consistent demographic or situational differences between women who disclosed domestic violence to survey researchers versus those who chose to confide in their welfare caseworker. If such differences exist, their identification would aid greatly in considering and designing improvements to the domestic violence screening process in Maryland welfare offices, a key component of the Family Violence Option and the first step in helping domestic violence victims receiving welfare.

Methodology

Sample

The sample used for this research originated from a project on employment barriers sponsored by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) of the US Department of Health and Human Services. A random sample of single parent Maryland Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) cases that received cash benefits in June 2002 and had at least one child on the case was drawn for the original study (n = 1,146). Payees were then approached to participate in a telephone survey, the TANF Caseload Survey designed by Mathematica Policy, Inc., conducted between August 19 and October 31, 2002, and a 71 percent response rate was achieved (n = 819). This project limits the 819 respondents further so that the sample discussed here includes only individuals who responded to the questions about domestic violence (n=787). Domestic violence survey items consisted of 16 behavior and experience related questions spanning events such as being pushed, grabbed or shoved to harassment and interference with attempts to work or go to school. These questions are presented in the Appendix at the end of this report.[1]

The 787 sample members were separated into four distinct groups as listed in Table 1. The first group includes individuals who disclosed recent (within the past year) domestic violence to the survey researcher, but were not marked in the administrative data system as revealing this information to their caseworker (n = 142). The second

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1 The TANF Caseload Survey was developed by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., in consultation with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) and was administered via computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI). The majority of the domestic violence questions were designed using a modified version of the Conflict Tactics Scale based on guidance from the Women's Employment Study - University of Michigan; two additional questions were taken from the Nebraska Client Barriers Survey 2000.

group includes sample members who disclosed recent domestic violence to the survey interviewer and had a domestic violence-related administrative mark in the automated system sometime in the 12 months prior to completing the interview (n = 6). The third group consists of those who were marked for domestic violence in the administrative data within the past year, but did not report recent domestic violence during the telephone survey (n = 7).[2] The final group is used for comparison and is comprised of all remaining survey respondents (n = 632). While members of the comparison group did not disclose recent domestic violence to either their caseworker or the survey researcher and are referred to as "non-victims" in the paper, it is important to recognize the possibility that they did experience domestic violence in the distant past or that they experienced recent abuse but decided not to disclose the experience.

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2 In effect, the sizes of these two subsamples are small, but as the original sample of survey respondents was designed with a 95% confidence level and $\pm$5% margin of error, the subsamples are valid and the only statistical risk involved with small groups is to make conservative errors. That is, differences that may be statistically significant with larger groups appear insignificant when using smaller groups. Thus, while the findings section focuses primarily on statistically significant differences among the groups, we also point out large differences that were not significant.

Table 1. Description of the Samples

Group	Definition	Size	Percent of total survey respondents
Survey disclosers	victims not administratively marked as such but who disclosed during the survey	n = 142	18.1%
Administratively marked survey disclosers	victims who disclosed and are so documented in the automated system as well as in the survey data	n = 6	0.7%
Administratively marked non-survey disclosers	victims who did not disclose to survey researchers, but are documented with a domestic violence-related mark in the automated system	n = 7	0.9%
Non-victims	welfare recipients with no indication of domestic violence within the past year	n = 632	80.3%

Data

This study utilizes both administrative and survey data, the latter collected between June and October 2002. Survey data were used for demographic information, as well as information regarding employment barriers. Specifically, the following demographic variables were derived from survey data: gender, age, race, marital status, highest education completed, household composition, and ages of children. Employment barriers, also obtained via the survey, were divided into three categories: human capital deficits; personal and family challenges; and logistical and situational challenges. Human capital deficits include having less than a high school diploma, lacking work experience, and routinely performing fewer than four job tasks. Personal and family challenges include poor physical health, caring for an ill friend or family member, pregnancy, mental health issues, chemical dependencies, severe domestic violence, learning disabilities, criminal records, and language barriers. Logistical and

situational challenges include transportation, child care, unstable housing, and perceived problem neighborhood characteristics.

Administrative data from Maryland automated systems were used to complement the survey data and specifically to provide information about cash assistance program participation and employment history. The data were retrieved from three computerized management information systems maintained by the State. These systems are: CIS, the Client Information System; AIMS/AMF, the Automated Information Management System/Automated Master File; and MABS, the Maryland Automated Benefits System.

Analyses

Data were analyzed using descriptive and bivariate statistics. Specifically, frequency tables summarized customer information and measures of central tendency described customer characteristics and trends. The chi-square and ANOVA statistical techniques tested for differences among the four groups. To reflect the true percentage of Baltimore City cases represented in Maryland's current TANF caseload, the data were weighted by a factor of either 1.31 (for Baltimore City) or 0.70 (for non-Baltimore City).

Findings

Casehead Characteristics

Individual demographic characteristics (gender, age, race, marital status, and education) are presented in Table 2 for each of the four groups; both age and race measures produced statistically significant results. Survey respondents who were not administratively marked for domestic violence were significantly younger than all three other groups, with an average age of 27.7 years. In contrast, the average age of the administratively marked survey non-disclosers was almost five years older at 32.3 years. As a point of reference, the group of general survey respondents (without disclosure of domestic violence in the past year), averaged 30.5 years old; differences among the groups are significant at the .01 level.

The analysis of race also reveals some interesting and statistically significant differences between the survey and administrative groups. Whereas 82.8% of survey disclosers reported that they were African American and only 16.7% were Caucasian (consistent with the non-victim group), the two administrative groups were noticeably different. The administrative group who disclosed in the survey was exactly half Caucasian and half African American. Similarly, administratively marked participants were 40.6% Caucasian and 49.3% African American. All else equal, this suggests that, for whatever reasons, African-American women may be less likely to disclose domestic violence to their welfare caseworkers.

Although neither marital status nor education measures produced statistically significant results, there are some notable differences between the survey and administrative victim groups. Among survey disclosers, 70.9% self-reported never

having been married; this is similar to the non-victim group (71.5%). However, both administrative groups had smaller percentages of never-married participants; only 50.0% of administratively marked survey disclosers and 59.4% of administratively marked survey non-disclosers reported having never been married. A similar pattern emerges in the measure of highest education completed. Again, the survey discloser population more closely parallels the non-victim group than either of the administrative groups. At the time the survey was completed, 42.1% of the non-victim group had either a high school diploma or had successfully completed a General Equivalency Diploma (GED) program, but had not gone further in their education. Similarly, 43.9% of the survey discloser population had a high school education. An additional 12.3% of survey disclosers and 15.9% of non-victims had more than a high school education. In contrast, the administratively marked groups seem to be more educated; 69.6% of those who were not survey disclosers and 87.5% of those who were survey disclosers had attained high school degree or more.

Table 2. Characteristics of the Heads of Single-Parent TANF Cases in Maryland

	Domestic Violence Victims			
	Survey disclosers	**Admin. & Survey**	**Administratively marked**	**No DV in past year**
Gender				
Female	100.0% (142)	100.0% (6)	100.0% (7)	100.0% (632)
Male	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Age[+]				
Younger than 25 years	43.8% (62)	12.5% (1)	20.3% (1)	34.5% (218)
25 to 34 years	35.5% (51)	62.5% (4)	49.3% (3)	34.0% (215)
35 years or older	20.7% (29)	25.0% (1)	30.4% (2)	31.5% (199)
Average age (years)**	27.7	31.1	32.3	30.5
Median age (years)	25.8	31.4	29.8	29.0
Race/Ethnicity[a]				
Caucasian, Non-Hispanic***	16.7% (23)	50.0% (3)	40.6% (3)	11.1% (70)
African American, Non-Hispanic***	82.8% (114)	50.0% (3)	49.3% (3)	88.3% (536)
Native American, Non-Hispanic[b]	3.4% (5)	0.0% (0)	10.1% (1)	2.6% (16)
Other non-Hispanic**	1.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	10.1% (1)	0.9% (6)
Hispanic	2.4% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2.3% (15)
Marital Status				
Never Married	70.9% (101)	50.0% (3)	59.4% (4)	71.5% (451)
Married or living with partner	12.8% (18)	25.0% (1)	10.1% (1)	11.2% (71)
Separated, divorced, or widowed	16.3% (23)	25.0% (1)	30.4% (2)	17.2% (109)
Highest Education Completed				
Less than high school diploma/GED	43.8% (62)	12.5% (1)	30.4% (2)	42.0% (265)
High school diploma/GED	43.9% (62)	50.0% (3)	69.6% (5)	42.1% (266)
More than high school diploma/GED	12.3% (18)	37.5% (2)	0.0% (0)	15.9% (100)
Sample Size	**142**	**6**	**7**	**632**

SOURCE: 2002 survey of single adult TANF cases in Maryland.

NOTES: The survey data have been weighted to be representative of all single-parent TANF recipients in Maryland. Survey item non-response may cause the sample sizes for specific variables to be smaller than those shown. Rounding may cause percentages to sum to something other than 100.

[a]Some cases may have identified more than one race category and, therefore, the categories shown are not mutually exclusive.

[b]Includes American Indians and Alaskan Natives.

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Household Composition

In addition to individual characteristics, information was also gathered about the households in which study participants resided. These data are presented in Table 3 which profiles households on the following variables: number of persons in the household; numbers of children under 18 and under six; age of the youngest child; and number of children under 18 living outside the home.

No statistically significant differences exist in the number of persons in the household and number of children under 18. The difference in number of children under six years old was statistically significant, but was very small, all four groups having an average of approximately one such child in their home. The largest gap exists between administratively marked non-survey disclosers (0.9 children) and survey disclosers (1.2 children). When examining the age of the youngest child in the household, also statistically significant at the .01 level, the average age of the youngest child among administratively marked non-survey disclosers (6.7 years) was more than two years older than any of the other groups. This might have been expected because, as shown in Table 2, the women in this group were, on average, slightly older than the others. Survey disclosers who were not administratively marked for domestic violence had the youngest children on average (3.1 years).

Table 3. Household Composition of Single-Parent TANF Cases in Maryland

	Domestic Violence Victims			
	Survey Disclosers	**Admin. & Survey**	**Administratively Marked**	**No DV in past year**
Household Composition				
Single parent, children	53.0% (76)	50.0% (3)	33.8% (2)	51.6% (326)
Two married adults, children[a]	3.4% (5)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.8% (12)
Single parent, partner, children[a]	2.9% (4)	37.5% (2)	11.3% (1)	5.0% (32)
Single parent, other adults, children[b]	43.0% (57)	12.5% (1)	54.9% (3)	39.3% (249)
Adults only, no children	0.5% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2.2% (14)
Average number of persons in HH	4.0	4.4	4.1	4.0
Median number of persons in HH	4.0	4.5	4.0	4.0
Number of Children Less than Age 18 in Household				
0	0.5% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2.2% (14)
1	29.3% (42)	37.5% (2)	11.3% (1)	33.8% (214)
2	35.7% (51)	12.5% (1)	54.9% (3)	32.9% (208)
3	24.5% (35)	12.5% (1)	33.8% (2)	17.4% (110)
4	6.2% (9)	25.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	8.5% (54)
5 or more	3.9% (6)	12.5% (1)	0.0% (0)	5.2% (33)
Average number of children < 18	2.2	2.6	2.2	2.2
Median number of children < 18	2.0	2.7	2.0	2.0
Number of Children Less than Age 6 in Household[+]				
0	22.6% (32)	25.0% (1)	54.9% (3)	35.4% (220)
1	40.0% (57)	50.0% (3)	11.3% (1)	39.1% (243)
2	29.7% (42)	12.5% (1)	22.6% (1)	20.2% (126)
3 or more	7.7% (11)	12.5% (1)	11.3% (1)	5.3% (33)
Average number of children < 6**	1.2	1.1	0.9	1.0
Median number of children < 6	1.0	1.0	0.3	1.0
Age of Youngest Child[*]				
Less than 1 year	22.2% (31)	12.5% (1)	11.3% (1)	19.2% (119)
1 to 5 years	55.1% (78)	62.5% (4)	33.8% (2)	46.0% (287)
6 to 14 years	20.7% (29)	12.5% (1)	54.9% (3)	31.3% (195)
15 years or older	1.9% (3)	12.5% (1)	0.0% (0)	3.5% (22)
Average age of youngest child**	3.1	4.4	6.7	4.5
Median age of youngest child	1.2	3.0	7.3	3.0
Have Own Children Less than Age 18 Living Outside Household***	13.9% (21)	50.0% (3)	20.3% (1)	7.7% (49)
Sample Size	**142**	**6**	**7**	**632**

SOURCE: 2002 survey of single adult TANF cases in Maryland.

NOTES: The survey data have been weighted to be representative of all single-parent TANF recipients in Maryland. Survey item non-response may cause the sample sizes for specific variables to be smaller than those shown. Rounding may cause percentages to sum to something other than 100.

[a] Other adults may also have been present in the household.

[b] Other adults is exclusive of a spouse or partner.

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Welfare and Employment History

Table 4 presents administrative data on welfare use, employment and earnings history for the four groups. There are some interesting patterns in the data, but none of the differences are statistically significant. Consistent with our many other studies of women heading Maryland cash assistance cases, we find that virtually all study participants have some history of participation in the labor force: over 90 percent were employed at some point in their lives. In the four quarters preceding the critical date (July 2001 to June 2002), the administratively marked groups generally worked more often and held more jobs than the other two groups. In fact, though survey disclosers and non-victims held an average of 1.1 different positions, administratively marked survey disclosers and non-survey disclosers worked an average of 1.3 and 1.9 jobs, respectively. In addition, administratively marked victims who did not disclose during the survey earned a quarterly average of $682.06, notably less than the three other groups, which earned, on average, over $1000 per quarter. In short, the former group, those who informed their caseworkers and were so noted in the agency data, in particular, seems to be working more and holding more jobs, but earning less.

In the first quarter of 2002 (January to March), more women in both of the administratively marked groups were employed compared to the non-administratively marked groups. Approximately three of 10 (30.4%) of the administratively marked non-survey disclosers and 50.0% of administratively marked survey disclosers were employed, but only about one-fourth of the survey disclosers and non-victim group had jobs. In the second quarter of 2002 (April to June) a similar pattern is seen: 37.5% and

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39.2% of the administratively marked groups were employed compared to 27.6% of the survey disclosers and 27.8% of the non-victim group.

The data regarding welfare history shows that administratively marked non-survey disclosers, on average, received cash assistance for more months over the previous five years and during the previous year, than any of the other groups. This group received assistance for an average of 31.3 months out of the last 60, compared to 24.3 months (survey disclosers not administratively marked) and 18.3 months (administratively marked survey disclosers). The fourth group, women with no survey or agency indication of recent domestic violence, on average, received welfare in 25.8 of the last 60 months. In the most recent 12-month period, administratively marked survey non-disclosers received assistance for an average of 9.1 months, in comparison to 8.1 months for survey disclosers not administratively marked and 5.6 months for survey disclosers who were administratively marked. Women who did not disclose any recent domestic violence to their caseworkers or the surveyors averaged 8.6 months of cash assistance receipt in the last 12 month period.

Table 4. Welfare and Employment Experiences

	Domestic Violence Victims			
	Survey disclosers	**Admin. & Survey**	**Administratively marked**	**No DV in past year**
Ever employed	93.9% (134)	100.0% (6)	100.0% (7)	92.2% (583)
Preceding 4 quarters Percent employed Mean # of quarters worked Mean consecutive quarters worked Mean # of jobs held Mean total earnings Mean average quarterly earnings	63.0% (90) 1.3 1.3 1.1 $2945.95 $1126.85	62.5% (4) 1.5 1.4 1.3 $3648.74 $1205.60	81.1% (6) 2.0 2.0 1.9 $2243.93 $682.06	56.1% (355) 1.3 1.2 1.1 $3774.73 $1365.72
Percent employed, quarter preceding June 2002	21.3% (30)	50.0% (3)	30.4% (2)	26.1% (165)
Percent employed, quarter of June 2002	27.6% (39)	37.5% (2)	39.2% (3)	27.8% (176)
Number of months of TCA receipt in last 60 Mean Median Standard Deviation Range	24.3 22.0 15.9 1-60	18.3 14.6 19.2 1-42	31.3 37.3 19.2 2-57	25.8 24.0 16.2 1-60
Number of months of TCA receipt in last 12 Mean Median Standard Deviation Range 1-3 months 4-6 months 7-9 months 10-12 months	8.1 9.0 3.8 1-12 18.8% (27) 15.8% (22) 20.2% (29) 45.2% (64)	5.6 6.7 5.2 1-12 50.0% (3) 0.0% (0) 12.5% (1) 37.5% (2)	9.1 12.0 4.4 2-12 20.3% (1) 10.1% (1) 0.0% (0) 69.6% (5)	8.6 10.0 3.7 1-12 14.1% (89) 16.5% (105) 17.2% (109) 52.2% (330)
Sample Size	**142**	**6**	**7**	**632**

SOURCE: MABS, CIS 2002

NOTES: The survey data have been weighted to be representative of all single-parent TANF recipients in Maryland.
Survey item nonresponse may cause the sample sizes for specific variables to be smaller than those shown.
Rounding may cause percentages to sum to something other than 100.

Potential Barriers for Employment

The final two tables illuminate and summarize self-reported potential barriers to employment faced by domestic violence victims on welfare. In Table 5, the barriers are divided into three subgroups: human capital deficits; personal and family challenges; and logistical and situational challenges. Table 6 then presents the total number of barriers from each category that women reported encountering while trying to secure and maintain employment.

Analyses of the data focus mainly on comparisons between survey disclosers who were administratively marked for domestic violence and survey disclosers who were not administratively marked. Women who were administratively marked but did not disclose to survey researchers are not discussed because the reasons they elected not to disclose to surveyors cannot be determined. Conceivably, the decision not to report domestic violence could be related to a decision to under-report other barriers as well, and thus we feel it would be unwise to include this group in the discussion. In general, however, women in this group tended to have fewer barriers than the other victim groups yet usually more than the non-victim group.

Human capital deficits include having less than a high school education, lacking work experience, and having routinely performed fewer than four common job tasks. Although analyses did not produce statistically significant results, there are some notable differences between the survey disclosers group and those who were marked for domestic violence in both the administrative and survey data. Non-administratively marked disclosers reported less education; 43.8% had less than a high school education versus 12.5% of the administratively marked group. Also, although similar

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percentages within each group reported substantial work experience (defined as working for pay at least 50 percent of the time since turning age 18), survey disclosers without administrative markers were less likely to have diversified job experiences. Within this group, 22.4% said they had routinely performed fewer than four common job tasks. In contrast, all administratively marked survey disclosers said they had routinely performed at least four of the listed tasks (talking with customers face to face or over the phone, reading instructions or reports, working with a computer, doing arithmetic, and filling out forms, among others).

Regarding personal and family challenges, survey disclosers who were not administratively marked for domestic violence were less likely to report these types of barriers than were administratively marked survey disclosers. On measures of physical health problems, having to care for an ill friend or family member, mental health problems, chemical dependence, learning disabilities, and criminal records, administratively marked survey disclosers reported more disadvantage. Both the mental health and chemical dependence measures were statistically significant.

Logistical and situational challenges include transportation issues, problems with childcare, unstable housing (based on number of evictions and moves in the past year), and perceived problem neighborhood characteristics. Again, more women in the administratively marked survey disclosers group reported barriers in this category than those from the survey disclosers group. Measures on transportation problems, childcare difficulties, and unstable housing were all statistically significant. On the final measure, perceived problem neighborhood characteristics, the difference was not

statistically significant, and the groups were very similar (57.1% and 57.7% for the administrative and survey groups respectively).

Regarding the final table, Table 6, those who disclosed domestic violence during the survey but not to their welfare caseworker had statistically fewer barriers to employment overall than those who disclosed to their caseworker and to the survey researcher. On average, survey disclosers reported 5.3 barriers, and survey disclosers who were also administratively marked reported 6.8 barriers. This pattern held true for personal and family challenges as well as logistical and situational challenges (2.3 and 3.3 barriers respectively for personal/family, and 2.1 and 2.9 barriers respectively for logistical/situational). Concerning human capital deficits, however, administratively marked survey disclosers had fewer barriers (average 0.4), while the survey disclosers averaged 0.9. However, this difference was not statistically significant.

In general, the non-victim group was less likely to report barriers to employment than either victim group. Concerning human capital deficits, this group averaged the same number of barriers as survey disclosers. However, in each of the other two categories (personal and family, and logistical and situational), the non-victim group averaged only one barrier. Overall, the non-victim group averaged 3.5 barriers to employment, compared to 5.3 among survey disclosers and 6.8 among those who were administratively marked survey disclosers.

Table 5. Summary of Potential Barriers for Employment

	Domestic Violence Victims			
	Survey Disclosers	**Admin. & Survey**	**Administratively Marked**	**No DV in past year**
Human Capital Deficits				
Less than High School/GED	43.8% (62)	12.5% (1)	30.4% (2)	42.0% (265)
No work experience [a]	22.8% (32)	25.0% (1)	49.3% (3)	20.2% (128)
Performed less than four common job tasks	22.4% (32)	0.0% (0)	39.2% (3)	27.1% (171)
Personal and Family Challenges				
Physical health problem [b]	20.1% (28)	42.9% (2)	30.4% (2)	20.1% (124)
Child or other family member or friend with a health problem or special need [c]	37.3% (53)	50.0% (3)	50.7% (4)	32.4% (200)
Pregnant	5.0% (7)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	5.3% (31)
Mental health problem*** [d]	43.6% (61)	100.0% (6)	30.4% (2)	25.2% (157)
Chemical dependence* [e]	9.0% (13)	25.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	4.0% (25)
Severe physical domestic violence in past year***	78.8%(112)	75.0% (4)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Possible presence of learning disability	15.5% (22)	25.0% (1)	20.3% (1)	9.4% (58)
Criminal record	17.2% (24)	25.0% (1)	29.0% (2)	12.1% (76)
Difficulty with English	1.5% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.8% (5)
Logistical and Situational Challenges				
Transportation* [f]	32.4% (46)	62.5% (4)	30.4% (2)	24.3% (153)
Child care*** [f]	62.1% (88)	87.5% (5)	30.4% (2)	36.4% (229)
Unstable housing*** [g]	30.8% (44)	50.0% (3)	43.6% (3)	17.9% (113)
Perceived problem neighborhood characteristics [h]	57.7% (80)	57.1% (3)	22.6% (1)	56.7% (336)
Sample Size	**142**	**6**	**7**	**632**

SOURCE: 2002 survey of single adult TANF cases in MARYLAND.

NOTES: The survey data have been weighted to be representative of all single-parent TANF recipients in Maryland. Survey item non-response may cause the sample sizes for specific variables to be smaller than those shown. Rounding may cause percentages to sum to something other than 100.

[a]Worked for pay less than 50 percent of time since turning age 18.
[b]Poor or fair overall health and physical functioning in the lowest quartile.
[c]Cases with a child with health, behavioral, or special need or those caring for an elderly, disabled, or sick family member or friend.
[d]High level of nonspecific psychological distress or probable major depression.
[e]Probable alcohol or drug dependence.
[f]Self-reported problems that prevented case head from participating in work, education, or training during the past year.
[g]Having been evicted or moving two or more times in the past 12 months.
[h]At least one neighborhood characteristic is perceived by case head to be a big problem.

*p<0.05,**p<0.01,***p<0.001

Table 6. Number of Potential Barriers for Employment

	Domestic Violence Victims			No DV in past year
	Survey Disclosers	Admin. & Survey	Administratively Marked	No DV in past year
Number of Human Capital Deficits [a]				
0	44.3% (62)	62.5% (4)	40.6% (3)	44.0% (277)
1	30.5% (43)	37.5% (2)	10.1% (1)	28.6% (180)
2	16.7% (24)	0.0% (0)	39.2% (3)	21.3% (134)
3	8.5% (12)	0.0% (0)	10.1% (1)	6.0% (38)
Average	0.9	0.4	1.2	0.9
Median	1.0	0.0	1.5	1.0
Number of Personal and Family Challenges* [b]**				
0	8.3% (11)	0.0% (0)	11.3% (1)	39.4% (221)
1	26.2% (34)	0.0% (0)	66.2% (4)	31.7% (178)
2	26.5% (34)	42.9% (2)	0.0% (0)	19.9% (112)
3	19.7% (26)	14.3% (1)	11.3% (1)	5.7% (32)
4	10.5% (14)	28.6% (1)	11.3% (1)	2.4% (13)
5 or more	8.8% (12)	14.3% (1)	0.0% (1)	0.9% (5)
Average	2.3	3.3	1.5	1.0
Median	2.0	3.1	1.0	1.0
Number of Logistical and Situational Challenges* [c]**				
0	7.6% (10)	0.0% (0)	25.4% (1)	19.9% (116)
1	30.0% (41)	25.0% (1)	36.4% (2)	34.2% (200)
2	23.3% (32)	25.0% (1)	12.7% (1)	26.3% (154)
3	25.7% (35)	25.0% (1)	25.4% (1)	14.9% (87)
4	10.5% (14)	25.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	4.0% (23)
5	2.9% (4)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.7% (4)
Average	2.1	2.9	1.4	1.5
Median	2.0	3.1	1.0	1.0
Number of All Potential Barriers for Employment* [d]**				
0	0.6% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	5.6% (29)
1	2.2% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	12.4% (65)
2	5.9% (7)	0.0% (0)	14.6% (1)	17.0% (89)
3	14.0% (17)	16.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	19.2% (100)
4	12.1% (15)	16.7% (1)	41.7% (2)	16.3% (85)
5	22.3% (28)	0.0% (0)	29.1% (1)	12.0% (63)
6	15.1% (19)	0.0% (0)	14.6% (1)	9.2% (48)
7 or more	27.8% (35)	66.6% (3)	0.0% (0)	8.2% (43)
Average	5.3	6.8	4.3	3.5
Median	5.0	8.0	4.2	3.0
Sample Size	**142**	**6**	**7**	**632**

SOURCE: 2002 survey of single adult TANF cases in MARYLAND.

NOTES: The survey data have been weighted to be representative of all single-parent TANF recipients in Maryland. Survey item non-response may cause the sample sizes for specific variables to be smaller than those shown. Rounding may cause percentages to sum to something other than 100.

[a] Human capital deficits include having no high school diploma, no work experience, or having fewer than 4 job skills.

[b] Personal and family challenges include health problems, family member or friend with health problems, current pregnancy, mental health problem, drug or alcohol dependence, experience with severe domestic violence, possible learning disability, criminal record, or difficulty with English language.

[c] Logistic and situational challenges include transportation problems, child care problems, unstable housing, discrimination, or bad neighborhood conditions.

[d] Includes any of the above.

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Conclusions

      According to self-report during telephone interviews, recent domestic violence is

a common issue faced by Maryland welfare recipients. Almost one in five respondents

(18.8%, 148/787) said she had experienced domestic violence in the year prior to the

survey. However, the administrative welfare data portrays a very different picture; only

1.7% (13/787) of survey respondents had an administrative marker in the automated

system in the year prior to the survey. Unexpectedly, not all of the administratively

marked victims had disclosed their experience of violence to the surveyor. Only six

women who disclosed in the survey were marked for domestic violence in the

administrative data (0.8% of the total sample). Conversely, seven women (0.9% of the

total sample) had disclosed to their welfare caseworker, but not to the surveyor. A

possible explanation for this latter group may include a personal mistrust of surveys or a

discomfort with sharing personal information over the telephone. Also, it is possible that

although the abuse might have occurred more than one year ago, administrative data

may still reflect eligibility for an exemption during the study period. This group

presented an inconsistent relationship to either of the other victim groups in the analysis

of barriers to employment, but reflected consistent demographic trends.

      It appears from study data that individuals who disclose domestic violence to

their welfare caseworkers do differ from those who choose not to do so. These findings

indicate that a variety of sub-groups of "missing" victims, rather than one particular

profile or a typical hard-to-identify victim, exist. Differences among the groups are

mainly demographic, specifically age and race, and to a lesser degree marital status

and education. At least during the time period covered by this study it appears that

African American women and younger women are those who are least likely (or willing) to reveal domestic violence to their caseworkers. Although differences were not statistically significant, there is also some hint in these data suggesting that never-married and less well-educated women may also be less likely to tell their welfare caseworkers about domestic violence.

On the other hand, decisions to disclose seem to have little to do with welfare or employment history. Virtually all women in all groups have at least some history of labor force participation. Analyses of barriers to employment yield complex results, suggesting that women experiencing more personal and family, as well logistical and situational, challenges are more likely to disclose abuse to their welfare caseworker. In contrast to past theories, we conclude that FVO screening practices have differing effects on different types of women.

First, it appears that age and race should be considered possible risk factors for not disclosing domestic violence or being missed by current FVO screening practices. The proportion of African American women among administratively marked survey disclosers was significantly smaller than among survey disclosers who were not marked in the agency data. This large and statistically significant difference in ethnicity is of concern on its own. Moreover, other data have indicated that African Americans are at increased risk for domestic abuse. The National Crime Victimization Survey, for example, found that African American women were more likely to report domestic violence than were Caucasians (Rennison & Welchans, 2000). Age also appears to matter. Our data show that survey disclosers who were not administratively marked were significantly younger. However, while younger women are underrepresented in

the administratively marked survey discloser group, they do constitute a large proportion of the survey discloser group. Additionally, research on teen dating and cohabitating relationships indicates that violence in younger age groups is more common than previously thought (Barnett, Miller-Perrin, & Perrin, 1997; Kenney & McLanahan, 2001).

Second, although not statistically significant, there is at least the suggestion in our data that marital status and education may also have some association with the likelihood of revealing domestic violence to welfare caseworkers. Separated and divorced women were more likely to be identified as victims in the administrative data. This finding makes intuitive sense, but it may suggest that a number of never-married women are not being recognized or choosing to identify themselves as victims. The bias towards the term "spousal abuse" rather than "intimate partner abuse" in many communities may also exist in welfare agencies. It is also of concern that women without a high school education were less likely to be identified as victims in the administrative welfare records since 43.8% of the survey disclosers had less than a high school education.

Beyond finding demographic subgroups of "missing" victims, it is heartening to learn that victims who disclosed to survey researchers and not to their caseworker did not have significantly more employment barriers than those who were marked in the administrative data. Overall, survey disclosers reported fewer personal and family challenges and fewer logistical and situational challenges, than those in the administratively marked survey disclosers group. As mentioned previously, administratively marked survey non-disclosers present a curious profile. On some measures, they mirror survey disclosers and on others they resemble the

administratively marked survey discloser group. Considering human capital deficits however, both the non-victim and survey disclosers groups presented more barriers than either of the administratively marked groups. This is cause for concern because research suggests that women usually have difficulty finishing school or going to work because of the violent situations they are in (Moore & Selkowe, 1999). It could also be indicative of a distressing catch-22 since caseworkers may be less likely to sympathize with or support women who do not appear to be taking independent action towards improving their situation, despite the fact that the violence may be the reason they are unable to do so.

In short, these findings suggest that current frontline practices may not be adequate in screening, identifying, or recording domestic violence among African Americans and younger women, and perhaps never-married women and those with less education as well. However, according to our data, these groups are not less likely to experience abuse and, in fact, are disclosing the abuse to survey researchers. Moreover, other research has demonstrated that these groups are at least as likely and perhaps even more likely to experience domestic violence. Thus, the findings presented here indicate that women with the above characteristics may be disproportionately slipping through the cracks of a well-intentioned, potentially very effective policy. This could be due to a reluctance to disclose, insufficient or inappropriate screening methods, or both. In either case, this reality suggests that the FVO in Maryland and perhaps elsewhere may not have been utilized by or assisted as many women as could have potentially benefited from the exemptions and service referrals it makes available.

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Appendix
Domestic Violence Questions in the TANF Caseload Survey

H.24. The next questions are about abuse in relationships. As with the rest of the survey, your answers are confidential and questions are the type that you can just answer with a yes or no. However, if these are questions you can't answer right now, for example, because you feel unsafe or are uncomfortable because you are not alone in the house, please let me know and we can skip this series of questions. If objection, skip to I1.

H.25. We are interested in learning more about women's experience of abuse in their relationships. Sometimes this can affect their work lives. In your current or past relationships has a husband, boyfriend, or partner, or anyone you have been in a romantic relationship with <u>ever</u> . . . **(READ EACH ITEM)**

	INTERVIEWER: FOR EACH YES RESPONSE, ASK H26 IMMEDIATELY.			H26. Did this happen in the last 12 months?	
		<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
a.	threatened to hit you with a fist or anything that could hurt you?	01	00	01	00
b.	thrown anything at you that could hurt you?	01	00	01	00
c.	pushed, grabbed or shoved you?	01	00	01	00
d.	slapped, kicked or bit you?	01	00	01	00
e.	hit you with a fist?	01	00	01	00
f.	hit you with an object that could hurt you?	01	00	01	00
g.	beaten you?	01	00	01	00
h.	choked you?	01	00	01	00
i.	threatened to or used a weapon?	01	00	01	00
j.	forced you into any sexual activity against your will?	01	00	01	00
k.	threatened to take your children away?	01	00	01	00
l.	threatened to harm, or harmed, your family or friends?	01	00	01	00
m.	made you do illegal things?	01	00	01	00
n.	threatened to turn you in to child protection or welfare if you didn't do what he wanted you to do?	01	00	01	00
o.	harassed you at work, training, or school?	01	00	01	00
p.	interfered with your attempts to go to work, training, or school?	01	00	01	00

H.27. During the past 12 months, was your relationship with a current or past husband, boyfriend, or partner ever such a problem that you could not take a job or had to stop working, or could not attend education or training activities?

YES 01

NO 00

DON'T KNOW ....-1

REFUSED ....-3

Notes: The TANF Caseload Survey was developed by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., in consultation with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) and was administered via computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) during fall 2002. Questions H.24 and H.27 were taken from the Nebraska Client Barriers Survey 2000, and Questions H.25 and H.26 were formed using a modified version of the Conflict Tactics Scale based on guidance from the Women's Employment Study - University of Michigan. These questions were asked only of female respondents.