ABSTRACT

Child abuse and neglect results in unwanted outcomes for both the child victim and the community. Research demonstrates that outcomes are seen long after the child abuse and neglect occurs. Therefore, prevention efforts aimed at child abuse and neglect will help improve the overall health of North Dakota.

BACKGROUND

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study, a collaboration between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Kaiser Permanente, is one of the largest investigations ever conducted into the correlation of childhood maltreatment and adult health and well-being. Many people are unaware that experiences in childhood directly impact the outcomes seen later in life. Understanding the implications of adverse childhood experiences in North Dakota is a large undertaking; for this reason, a glimpse into one aspect of ACE, child abuse and neglect, is the focus of this research.

2012 DATA

For every 1,000 children in North Dakota, 9.1 were abused or neglected in 2012.

- N.D. = 9.1 per 1,000
- U.S. = 9.2 per 1,000

North Dakota counties with the largest rates:

- Divide County = 38.5 per 1,000
- Ramsey County = 27.5 per 1,000
- Williams County = 16.6 per 1,000
- Grand Forks County = 15.4 per 1,000
- Walsh County = 14.6 per 1,000

DISCUSSION

Rates of child abuse and neglect vary widely by county in North Dakota. While North Dakota's overall rate of child abuse and neglect is slightly lower than the national average, two counties in the state had rates in 2012 that were more than twice the national average (Ramsey and Divide). These rates have a variety of undesirable implications for the future of North Dakota's children such as substance abuse, obesity and eating disorders, suicide, and high-risk sexual behavior. Effects can be seen long after the child abuse and neglect occurred leading to a variety of long-lasting impacts well into adulthood.

IMPLICATIONS

These rates have a variety of undesirable implications for the future of North Dakota’s children such as substance abuse, obesity and eating disorders, suicide, and high-risk sexual behavior. Effects can be seen long after the child abuse and neglect occurred leading to a variety of long-lasting impacts well into adulthood. Research shows these negative outcomes can be combated with education, increased awareness, and community engagement. Moreover, protective factors have been identified to strengthen the prevention and treatment outcomes that include: parental resilience, social connections, stable family relationships, parental employment, and a variety of other factors. Overall, lowering the rate of child abuse and neglect in North Dakota will improve child outcomes and will likely result in an overall healthier North Dakota. More information about child abuse prevention measures is available at http://www.pcand.org.

LIMITATIONS

As not all cases of abuse and neglect may be reported to the proper authorities, it is important to note that these are conservative numbers. Also, cases of child maltreatment occurring on tribal lands are processed through separate tribal systems and are not included in numbers reported by the North Dakota Department of Human Services.

SOURCES