

## OUTLINE OF EVIDENCE

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### 1. CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTS IN ONTARIO

- Rates of reported child abuse and neglect have been rising at a constant rate over the past 35 years.
- Reports to the Ontario Child Abuse Registry from 1979 to 1985 increased threefold from 700 to 2,200, with child sexual abuse reports accounting for most of the increase (as reported in Figure 4.8, page 76, Trocmé, 1991).
- Data that I extracted from the files of the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies and the Ministry of Community and Social Services shows that rates of child physical and sexual abuse investigated by Ontario CAS increased more than doubles from 1983 to 1988 (as reported in Figure 4.7, page 75, Trocmé, 1991).
- Using data from three provincial surveys that I conducted with colleagues in 1993, 1998 and 2003 (Fallon et al. 2005; Trocmé et al. 2002; Trocmé et al 1994) we have documented a reversal in the trend for sexual abuse reports, while reports of physical abuse and other forms of maltreatment have continued to increase.

<b>Estimated sexual abuse and maltreatment investigations in Ontario</b>			
	1993 (OIS 93 Table 3.2)	1998 (OIS 98 Table 3.3)	2003 (OIS 03 Table 3.6)
Sexual Abuse Investigations	11,846	6,166	6,754
Substantiated Sexual Abuse Investigations	3,437	1,788	1,490
All Substantiated Maltreatment Investigations	12,309	22,661	58,425
Percent of Sexual Abuse in Substantiated Maltreatment	28%	8%	3%

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### 2. CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTS IN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES

- The trends noted in Ontario are consistent with trends, where available, from other jurisdictions.

- During the 1980s and early 1990s the National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS) in the United States documented a fivefold increase in sexual abuse cases (includes reports to child protection services and cases identified by professionals in the community) from 1980 to 1993, from 42,900 to 217,700 with all cases of maltreatment increasing 2.5 times from 625,100 to 1,553,800. Unfortunately, there have been no subsequent NIS studies.
- Reports to child protection authorities have been tracked by Professor David Finkelhor in the United States using the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System. He shows that:

“After a 15-year increase (1977–92), national data show that substantiated cases of child sexual abuse have been decreasing since about 1992. Summary data from NCANDS indicate that cases of substantiated child sexual abuse reached an estimated peak of 149,800 in 1992, followed by declines of 2 to 11 percent each year through 1998, the last year for which data are available (figure 1). In 1998, estimated cases of child sexual abuse reached a low of approximately 103,600.1 This is a total decline of 31 percent in identified child sexual abuse cases over a 6-year period”

- Across Canada the only national statistics available are from our two Canadian Incidence Studies (1998 & 2003). Not including Québec, the number of substantiated sexual abuse cases decreased from 4,322 in 1998 to 2,935 in 2003, while the total number of substantiated maltreatment cases increased during the same period from 46,388 to 103,297.

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### 3. SEXUAL ASSAULTS INVESTIGATED BY THE POLICE

- The Uniform Crime Reports II (UCR II) tracks police investigations conducted in police forces that submit reports to the UCR II database. In 1993 111 police forces, mostly in Quebec and Ontario, were submitting reports to UCR II, providing non-systematic estimate of the profile of these cases. Comparison with the OIS 93 data yields some interesting similarities and differences, given that by the early 90s police-child welfare protocols were already in place in many jurisdictions. Analyses by Trocmé & Brison (1998) shows that the rate per 1,000 children of police sexual assault investigations was 4.0 for female victims 0-19 and 0.9 for male victims (Table 6, page 276). Table 8 describing rates of substantiated or suspected sexual abuse investigated by Ontario CASs (OIS 93) shows a similar rate for girls, 4.0 per 1,000, but a much higher rate for boys, 2.2 per 1,000. This may indicate that sexual abuse of boys was under-reported to the police at that time.

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#### **4. PREVALENCE OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**

- Rates of reported child sexual abuse are different from estimates of the childhood prevalence of child sexual abuse reported by adults in confidential surveys. The two major prevalence surveys in Canada are the 1983 Badgley survey (Badgley, 1984) and the 1990 Ontario Health Survey (OHS: MacMillan et al, 1997).
- The Badgley survey found that 8.2% of males and 17.6% of females reported experienced unwanted sexual touching or attempted or completed intercourse before age 17, while the OHS found that 3.9% of males and 11.1% of females reported similar experiences of sexual abuse (Source: Macmillan et al. 1997, page 134).
- The difference between the two studies can be accounted for by differences in the types of questions used. The range of findings reported in these studies is consistent with findings reported in dozens of similar studies around the world. While these types of studies help to establish the prevalence of sexual abuse, there is not enough trend data available to determine whether rates of sexual abuse in the population are starting to decrease in a similar fashion as are reports to authorities.

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#### **5. SOURCE OF REPORTS TO CHILD WELFARE (OIS 93)**

- Reports of sexual abuse to child welfare authorities in Ontario in 1993 were made primarily by custodial parents (22%), schools (15%), the police (9%), and friends or acquaintances (9%). (OIS 93 Table 7.1).

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#### **6. INTENTIONALLY FALSE (MALICIOUS) REPORTS ARE RARE (OIS 93)**

- While 42% of reports to child welfare authorities in Ontario in 1993 were considered unfounded or unsubstantiated, most were considered to have been done in good faith. Only 3% were considered to be malicious, and in cases of sexual abuse only 1% were considered malicious (OIS 1993, Table 7.4).
- A further analysis of malicious reports in the 1998 CIS confirms that these reports are rare in sexual abuse cases involving custody disputes (Trocmé & Bala, 2005)

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## **7. PERPETRATORS OF CHILD WELFARE REPORTED CASES (OIS 93)**

- Investigated perpetrators in cases of sexual abuse in Ontario in 1993 were primarily fathers or step-fathers or relatives or family acquaintances. Professionals were investigated in 3% of cases (OIS 93, Table 4.4b)

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## **8. DISPOSITION OF REPORTS TO CHILD WELFARE (OIS 93)**

- The OIS 93 tracked short-term case dispositions on the basis of information available at the end of the initial 2-month intake investigation. Forty-two percent of intra-familial (parent perpetrator) sexual abuse cases were kept open for on-going services and 34% of extra-familial cases were kept open, overall a slightly lower rate of service compared to other forms of maltreatment (47% of physical abuse and neglect). Placement in out of home care was rarely used in sexual abuse cases (10% intra-familial, 4% extra-familial, compared to 22% in cases of neglect). In contrast, the police were involved in most sexual abuse cases, 63% for intra-familial and 75% extra-familial, with charges being laid in 46% and 31% of these cases respectively.