Towards better prevention of child abuse

Factors facilitating and impeding Dutch child healthcare professionals’ use of the guideline *Secondary prevention child abuse*.

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Background

Introduction

- Secondary prevention of child abuse:
  ‘Early detection of (threats for) child abuse and responding appropriately to prevent further abuse’

- Guidelines may improve secondary prevention of child abuse
  - Explicit recommendations
  - Facilitating consistent work procedures
  - Promoting evidence based practice
  - Providing guidance in complex situations

- Guidelines have limited effects on behavioral change…

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Background
Introduction

Dutch preventive child healthcare
• Child health clinics (0-4)
• School health care (4-19)
• Key role in early detection of health and social problems
  → Specific guideline for secondary prevention of child abuse

Core recommendations when suspicion persists:
✓ Risk assessment based on risk and protecting factors
✓ Talking with parents about suspected child abuse
✓ Consulting a child abuse expert (colleague)
✓ Consulting Child Protection Services (CPS) for advice
✓ Sharing information with other organizations
✓ Acting: organizing help or reporting to CPS
✓ Monitoring: asking for follow-up information

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Background
Research aims

Research aims:

- Examine self-reported use of the guideline *Secondary prevention child abuse* by CHPs
- Examine which factors, related to characteristics of the guideline, the professional, parents, the organizations and the socio political context facilitate or impede CHPs’ use of this guideline
Background
Conceptual model

Based on Fleuren, Wiefferink et al., 2004
Methods
Design

Two phases:

• **3 focus group interviews** with 14 CHPs working at child healthcare organization in Twente region (2012)

• **Online survey** spread among +/- 700 CHPs working at 17 child healthcare organizations in the Netherlands between May and July 2013 (still open)
  • So far, 160 CHPs participated
    • 30% physicians
    • 70% nurses
Results
Focus group interviews

* = Identified in all three focus group interviews
Preliminary results
Survey research

Suspicions of child abuse in the last 12 months
- 88%: $\geq 1$ suspicion
- 21%: $\geq 6$ suspicions

Familiarity with and use of the guideline
- 89% read the guideline partly or completely
- 75% uses the guideline, 21% has the intention to use it

Implementation strategies mentioned by respondents
- Training (36%)
- Informed by other CHPs (37%)
- Written or digital communication (12%)
- Information meeting (9%)
Preliminary results
Correlations

- Correlation significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)
- Correlation significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)
Preliminary results

Comparisons

Guideline use and recommended behavior when child abuse is suspected

I *always* do this activity when I suspect child abuse

I *never* do this activity when I suspect child abuse

Respondents that *do not* use the guideline (yet)

Respondents that *use* the guideline

* Significant

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(Preliminary) conclusions

Focus group interviews
- A broad variety of both facilitating and impeding factors

Online questionnaire
- Guideline users undertake recommended activities more often than non-users
  - Implementation efforts to improve CHP’s adoption of the guideline
- Guideline factors, social factors, self-efficacy, knowledge/skills and parents factors correlate significantly with guideline use
- A lot of barriers in external cooperation, but no correlation with guideline use

Next steps:
- Examine adherence to the various recommendations
- Examine influence of implementation strategies
- More analyses (regression analysis, mediation moderation)

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Thank you for your attention!

Questions?

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