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A LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF A
FAMILY MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work

by
Carl Bailey
Ana C. Hurd
Tina Tanguay-Hill

June 1993

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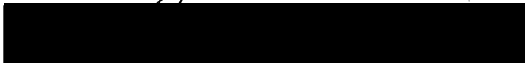
June 1993

Approved by


Teresa Morris Ph.D.

6/8/93

Date


Arnold Green LCSW


Teresa Morris, Chair, Research Sequence

ABSTRACT

This study reviewed a convenience sample of 96 family case records from San Bernardino Department of Public Social Services, Child Protective Services, Rancho Cucamonga office, Family Maintenance Program. The authors followed up on an initial phase of this longitudinal study in an effort to describe the families progress while in the Family Maintenance (FM) program. Specifically, the study attempts to define relationships existing between FM identified objectives and characteristics. After analyzing the data, it appears that neither identified strengths, rate of compliance to objectives, ethnicity nor court status were significantly related. The information gained from this study will be valuable in assisting the FM Agency to better understand and serve the needs of the abusive families.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to the staff of Rancho Cucamonga, Department of Public Social Services for their generous support and assistance with this project.

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Most of all, we offer our sincerest appreciation to Dr. Teresa Morris, whose unending, relentless support and encouragement made the completion of this project a pleasure.

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PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to the United States House of Representatives Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families, there are approximately 500,000 children currently in out-of-home placements. Recent hearings and a nationwide survey on child abuse by the Committee documented that the number of children placed in foster care is again on the rise (The Select Committee on Children, Youth and Family, 1987). It has been suggested that barring new governmental policies, this figure will increase to 850,000 by 1995 (The Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families, 1990).

There are growing concerns that services currently available for abused or at risk children are not meeting the needs of these children, their families nor the society as a whole. More specifically, the traditional approach of placing these children outside of the home has been criticized as being both ineffective, (Kameran & Kahn, 1990) and far more expensive than in home services (Lewis, 1990; Stroul & Freidman, 1986; The Select Committee of Children, Youth and Family, 1987).

Perhaps the most important finding is that out of home placement has been shown to be emotionally damaging to both the child and the family (Hawkins & Doueck, 1987; Kinney,

Dittmar, & Firth, 1991; Kufeldt & Ellison, 1990; Beck & Ooms, 1990). Specific data suggests that placing children to foster homes is traumatic and creates insecurity, mistrust, low self-esteem and hostility (Ainsworth, 1989; Haapala & Kinney, 1990; Hess, 1982; Shapiro, 1959, The Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families, 1987).

While out-of-home placements are undoubtedly the best, and often only option for some children, it is generally believed that when possible, children fare better when allowed to remain with their biological parents. From this frame of reference, recent emphasis has been placed on "permanency planning" in the child care system. In broad terms, permanency planning embodies the idea that every child is entitled to live in a family (preferably his or her own biological family) and to have the maximum opportunity for growth and development (Maluccio, 1984; Taylor, Lakin & Hill, 1989).

In 1980, there was change in the traditional approach in treating the abused child and his or her family. The motivation for this vital change came from the passage of Public Law 96-272: *The Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980*. This law mandated that all child welfare agencies make "reasonable efforts" to prevent the removal of abused children from their homes before allowing them to be placed outside the home. It also set time limits for children

in the foster care system and placed emphasis on maintaining children in the home with one or both parents or other relatives (Cimmarusti, 1992; Cole and Duva, 1990; Gustavsson, 1986; Wells & Beigel, 1992).

This mandate compelled the child welfare profession to reconsider in-home treatment and services for both the abused children and their families. Since the enactment of this law, the trend among social welfare agencies has been toward family-centered home-based services used as a mechanism for empowering the family to help themselves.

Most significantly, this act prompted the new approach labelled "intensive family preservation services" or "family maintenance". The aim of these services is to maintain family integrity, resolve the crises that could lead to out-of-home placement and to teach the family the basic skills needed to remain together while maintaining the child within the home (Kinney, Dittmar, & Firth, 1991, Scannapieco, 1991; Spaid & Fraser, 1991; Wells and Biegel, 1992).

This new approach is quickly gaining popularity as evidenced by recent statistics. In 1982 there were only 20 such programs in existence, however, by 1988, the country boasted 269 such services (National Resource Center on Family Based Services, 1988). In California, Assembly Bill 558, which was passed in 1988, further prompted the development of these intensive family programs within the state. This bill

launched a two-year, three county pilot program for intensive family preservation services known as "Family Maintenance" (FM) programs. Although San Bernardino County was not included in this initial pilot program, it does have a number of such programs and is evaluating the effectiveness and practicality of this new approach.

PROBLEM FOCUS

Over the last decade, child protective services (CPS) agencies have focused increasingly on providing interventions designed to strengthen families and keep abused and/or neglected children in their homes (Wald 1988). However, despite the growing number of family maintenance programs, there are relatively little empirical data to adequately evaluate the effectiveness of these programs. Furthermore, there continues to be a need for a longitudinal evaluation to assess if the desired outcome endures over time. Also needed are data suggesting which characteristics are associated with the maintenance of improvements made in family functioning over time. Moreover, much of the pre-existing data are flawed and unreliable (Kinney, Haapala, Booth, & Leavitt, 1990, Magura, 1981; Stein, 1985).

This report is the second stage of a longitudinal panel study monitoring the progress of a convenience sample of families who are clients of the family maintenance program at the Department of Public Social Services, Child Protective Services at Rancho Cucamonga, California. These families were tracked one year after initial selection into the study in order to gauge the progress on reduction of abusive and dysfunctional behaviors.

The primary research questions for the initial study were: "What are the characteristics of this sample of families receiving services from the FM program at Rancho Cucamonga, Department of Public Social Services, Child Protective Services?", "What is the relationship between court involvement and number of family strengths?" and "What is the relationship between court involvement and length of stay in the FM program.

The researchers of this second stage of this study have submitted additional extensive research questions. The research questions are : "Is there a significant difference between court and non court FM clients in their progress of assigned tasks?", "Is there a relationship between previously identified client strengths and positive client outcomes?", "Is there a correlation between positive client outcomes and assigned client tasks?" and "Is there a correlation between client ethnicity and task progress?"

With the tremendous impact that placement has on the abused child and family, this study is most relevant to the direct practice social work arena as it will explore how well clients are served by the FM program. It is also valuable on the administrative level as it will perform the additional function of providing some of the necessary data needed in order to evaluate and create similar policies and programs.

DESIGN AND METHODS

Purpose of the Study:

This study is the second stage of a larger longitudinal panel study which tracks the progress of 96 families who are clients of the Family Maintenance Program at Rancho Cucamonga, Department of Public Social Services (DPSS). Data collected in this longitudinal study will ultimately be used to assess the effectiveness of the services delivered through the Family Maintenance (FM). The final goal of this study will be to improve delivery services to families so that child abuse can be reduced.

Orientation:

A positivist orientation was adopted for this current study and quantitative information was gathered. This study provided a description of the current progress of the families in the sample over one year.

Human Subjects:

In order to maintain confidentiality and anonymity, the data did not include any personal identifying information, such as names or Social Security numbers. Rather, case

numbers assigned to them by Rancho Cucamonga, DPSS office were utilized which identified family units. The only connection between family names and numbers were the cross reference sheet that remains stored in the Rancho Cucamonga Family Maintenance supervisor's office.

This research project received a waiver from the California State University San Bernardino Human Subjects Committees in requiring consent from participants because only case records were the data source. In addition, the Rancho Cucamonga DPSS office has previously reviewed Human Subjects issues and granted permission for the study upon which a San Bernardino county juvenile court order was obtained.

Sampling:

This study was a one year follow-up on a convenience sample of 96 families drawn from a master list of open and closed FM cases at the Rancho Cucamonga DPSS office during July 1991. There were 60 court ordered cases and 36 non-court or voluntary cases. Of these 96 cases in the original sample, the authors were able to follow up on 87 of the cases (60 court ordered and 36 non court cases. The family unit, not the individual, was the chosen unit of analysis in this project.

The convenience sample was drawn from families who received Family Maintenance services at least one day during

the month of July 1991. The sample consisted of 60 court mandated cases and 36 non court cases. The sample of family members consisted of 36.4% white, 31.4% Hispanic, 15.6% Black, 0.1% Asian Pacific Isles, 0.0% American Indian/Alaskan, and 15.6% Unknown/Others (total = 63.6% non-white family members). Family ethnicity was self identified and reported to the agency.

Instrument:

Case dispositions or case outcomes were obtained via the FM Reassessment/Disposition Form (See Appendix 1). This form also provided information regarding objectives or tasks assigned to the family as well as rate of compliance to these objectives. In this study, the disposition of the cases were first identified from the FM Reassessment Form and were then broken down into two categories : "1", no longer abusing (positive outcomes); and 2, either currently abusing or not enough information to determine if currently abusing (or unknown outcomes). The former "positive outcome" category consisted of closure codes including: court dismissed, petition dismissed, fm service plan completed, closed cases, and family reunification while the latter "undetermined outcome" group consisted of closures such as open, transferred, FM time is up, and parents will not cooperate with voluntary services.

The researchers made frequent comparisons of their coding throughout the data collection period in order to ensure inter-rater reliability. In instances where the data interpretation was unclear, the researchers consulted each other in order to insure accurate data coding.

Data Collection Procedure:

The authors met with the researchers involved in the initial study, as well as with the director of the Rancho Cucamonga DPSS office. The purpose of the meeting was to orient the researchers as well as to provide background information as to the functioning of the FM program in general. In addition, the authors also met with the FM social workers to discuss specific details of file location, file retrieval, and computer access to client files.

All data was collected for the month of July 1992. The researchers spent an average of 15 hours per week in examining the pre-selected cases. The researchers pulled the files from the closed files as well as from the eight FM workers in the Rancho Cucamonga office and extrapolated the required information. Relationships between certain predetermined FM objectives, family characteristics, court involvement and case disposition were studied. In order to accurately determine these relationships and variables, a statistical data analysis package, (EPI), was utilized.

Agency Variables:

As part of the Family Maintenance program, families were assigned several objectives or tasks. Objectives used in this study included:

- 1, participate in parent education program ;
- 2, participate in drug and alcohol abuse program and abstinence period;
- 3, participate in Parent's United/Parent's anonymous program;
- 4, obtain psychiatric/psychological evaluation/follow recommendation, complete a course of therapy/counseling;
- 5, not leave minor unsupervised/develop childcare plan;
- 6, maintain safe and adequate home;
- 7, keep all scheduled medical, etc. appointments;
- 8, relieve financial/legal difficulties;
- 9, refrain from excessive corporal punishment;
- 10, cooperate and inform Department of Public Social Service (DPSS) social worker of changes/keep appointments with social worker.

The rate of compliance to each of these objectives was broken down into three categories including "no progress", "some progress" and "full progress".

Families strengths were identified by previous

researchers for the initial stage of this study. These strengths were correlated with other variables in this current study. Family assessed strengths include:

- 1, motivation;
- 2, cooperative;
- 3, family communication;
- 4, family value system;
- 5, extended family support;
- 6, use of community resources;
- 7, currently in therapy/counseling;
- 8, probation/parole supervision;
- 9, support of religious group;
- 10, ability to follow through;
- 11, support of friends.

RESULTS

Court Status and Compliance to Objectives

The first question which this study addressed was : "Is there a significant difference between court and non court FM families in their compliance with assigned objectives?". Chi square tests were run for each of the objectives. There was no significant difference between court and non court in terms of their compliance in completion of objectives for any of the 11 objectives. For some of the objectives such as therapy, safe home, refraining from corporal punishment and cooperating with social workers, both groups performed almost equally well. Non court cases did however have a higher success rate than court in the objectives of keeping medical appointments (non court = 66.7%, court = 54.8 %) while court mandated cases had a higher successful completion rate in parent education, drug and alcohol treatment, and not leaving child unsupervised (See Table 1).

Table 1: Court and Non Court Compliance to FM Objectives

Objective	Compliance	Court Status n=(96)	
		Non Court % n=(36)	Court % n=(60)
Parent Ed			
	no	36.8 (7)	25.0 (9)
	some	15.8 (3)	13.9 (5)
	full	47.4 (9)	61.1 (22)
	* missing (41)		
Drug/Alcohol	no	25.0 (1)	18.8 (3)
	some	50.0 (2)	37.5 (6)
	full	25.0 (1)	43.8 (7)
	* missing (76)		
Parents Anonymous	no	0.0 (0)	30.8 (4)
	some	0.0 (0)	30.8 (4)
	full	100.0 (1)	38.5 (5)
	* missing (82)		
Psych Eval	no	0.0 (0)	0.0 (1)
	some	0.0 (0)	28.6 (2)
	full	100.0 (3)	71.4 (5)
	* missing (86)		

Table 1: Court and Non Court Compliance to FM Objectives
(continued).

Therapy	no	23.5 (4)	21.2 (7)
	some	52.9 (9)	45.5 (15)
	full	23.5 (4)	33.3 (11)
	* missing (46)		
Supervise Minor	no	0.0 (0)	5.9 (2)
	some	50.0 (4)	26.5 (9)
	full	50.0 (4)	67.6 (23)
	* missing (54)		
Safe Home	no	0.0 (0)	6.3 (3)
	some	21.4 (3)	22.9 (11)
	full	78.6 (11)	70.8 (34)
	* missing (34)		
Med Appointments	no	0.0 (0)	9.7 (3)
	some	33.3 (5)	35.5 (11)
	full	66.7 (10)	54.8 (17)
	* missing (50)		
Legal/Financial	no	0.0 (0)	10.0 (2)
	some	0.0 (0)	30.0 (6)
	full	100.0 (4)	60.0 (12)
	* missing (72)		

Table 1: Court and Non Court Compliance to FM Objectives
(continued)

Corporal Punish	no	7.1 (1)	5.3 (1)
	some	14.3 (2)	31.6 (6)
	full	78.6 (11)	63.2 (12)
	* missing (63)		
Cooperate w/ SW	no	10.5 (2)	17.0 (8)
	some	31.6 (6)	21.3 (10)
	full	57.9 (11)	61.7 (29)
	* missing (30)		

* missing values indicate the number of families which were not assigned this objective.

Family Strengths and Disposition

The second part of this study addressed the question: "Is there a relationship between previously identified family strengths and family dispositions?". Again no statistically significant relationship was found between the family strengths and the disposition (See Table 2). There appeared to be no specific strengths that could predict a positive nor negative disposition for the cases. Regardless of the strengths, families tended to have positive outcomes on dispositions.

Indeed, most of the 87 families included in the study, most were identified as having few strengths. The two most frequently identified strengths were: motivated (46.7%) and cooperative (64.4%) while the two least identified strengths were: probation/parole supervision (4.4%), support of religious groups (3.3%) and support of friends (6.67%). More moderately identified strengths included family communication (18.9%), family value system (14.4%), extended family support (14.5%), and currently in therapy/counseling (17.8%).

Table 2: Agency Identified Family Strengths and Case Disposition

Strength	Disposition		
	Undetermined %	Positive %	*Missing
Motivation	26.2 (11)	73.8 (31)	(54)
Cooperation	32.8 (19)	67.2 (39)	(38)
Communication	23.5 (4)	76.5 (13)	(79)
Values	23.1 (3)	76.9 (10)	(83)
Family Support	33.3 (7)	66.7 (14)	(75)
Comm. Resources	26.9 (7)	73.1 (19)	(70)
Therapy	25.0 (4)	75.0 (12)	(80)
Probation Supervision	25.0 (1)	75.0 (3)	(92)
Religion	0.0 (0)	100.0 (3)	(93)
Follow Through	25.0 (4)	75.0 (12)	(80)
Friend Support	33.3 (2)	66.7 (4)	(90)

* missing values indicate the number of families not assessed as having this strength.

Case Disposition and Compliance to Objectives

In response to the third question of this study: Is there a relationship between disposition and compliance with the assigned family objectives, again no statistical significance was found (See Table 3). However, families ending the program with a positive outcome did have a higher rate of full compliance in contrast to families of undetermined outcomes on all of the objectives. This group did particularly well on seven of the eleven objectives including parent education program, participate in Parent's United/Parent's anonymous program, obtain psychiatric/psychological evaluation/follow recommendation, not leave minor unsupervised/develop childcare plan, maintain safe and adequate home, keep all scheduled medical appointments and relieve financial/legal difficulties.

Although undetermined family disposition cases did fairly well in refraining from excessive corporal punishment and in cooperating and informing DPSS social worker of changes/keeping appointments with social worker, still the positive disposition group fared better. Of further note is the fact that there was a minimal success rate of compliance from both groups on the following objectives: drug, alcohol abuse program and abstinence period and completing a course of therapy/counseling.

Table 3: Case Disposition and Compliance to FM Objectives

Objective	Compliance	Disposition	
		Undetermined%	Positive%
Parent Ed	no	44.4 (8)	21.6 (8)
	some	27.8 (5)	8.1 (3)
	full	27.8 (5)	70.3 (26)
	* Missing (41)		
Drug/Alcohol	no	33.3 (2)	14.3 (2)
	some	33.3 (2)	42.9 (6)
	full	33.3 (2)	42.9 (6)
	* Missing (76)		
Parents Anonymous	no	33.3 (2)	25.0 (2)
	some	50.0 (3)	12.5 (1)
	full	16.7 (1)	62.5 (5)
	* Missing (82)		
Psych Eval	no	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
	some	50.0 (2)	0.0 (0)
	full	50.0 (2)	100.0 (6)
	* Missing (86)		

Table 3: Case Disposition and Compliance to FM

Objectives (Continued)

Therapy	no	33.3 (5)	17.1 (6)
	some	40.0 (6)	51.4 (18)
	full	26.7 (4)	31.4 (11)
	* Missing (46)		
Supervise Minor	no	15.4 (2)	0.0 (0)
	some	53.8 (7)	20.7 (6)
	full	30.8 (4)	79.3 (23)
	* Missing (54)		
Safe Home	no	14.3 (2)	2.1 (1)
	some	42.9 (6)	16.7 (8)
	full	42.9 (6)	81.3 (39)
	* Missing (34)		
Med Appointments	no	21.4 (3)	0.0 (0)
	some	35.7 (5)	34.4 (11)
	full	42.9 (6)	65.6 (21)
	* Missing (50)		
Le211/Financial	no	25.0 (2)	0.0 (0)
	some	25.0 (2)	25.0 (4)
	full	50.0 (4)	75.0 (12)
	* Missing (72)		

Table 3: Case Disposition and Compliance to FM

Objectives (Continued)

Corporal Punish	no	11.1 (1)	4.2 (1)
	some	22.2 (2)	25.0 (6)
	full	66.7 (6)	70.8 (17)

* Missing (63)

Cooperate w/ SW	no	17.6 (3)	14.3 (7)
	some	29.4 (5)	22.4 (11)
	full	52.9 (9)	63.3 (31)

* Missing (30)

* Missing values indicate the number of families not assigned to this objective

Ethnicity and Compliance to Objectives

The final question of this study asked, "Is there a significant difference in compliance to the service plan objectives between White and Non-White families" (See Table 4). Based on the data that were obtained from this study, it was found that Non -White families tended to be identified by the social worker as more frequently compliant and successfully completing the service plan objectives than White families.

White families (100%) demonstrated a much greater percentage of successfully obtaining psychiatric and psychological evaluations and following their therapist recommendations than did Non-White families (66.7%). However, Non-White families (57.1%) tended to be more compliant in completing drug, alcohol abuse programs and maintaining their sobriety than White families (30.0%). In addition, Non-White families (88.9%) were identified as most successful in complying with relieving financial and/or legal difficulties as compared to White families (55.6%).

Table 4: Ethnicity and Compliance to FM Objectives

Objective	Compliance	Ethnicity	
		White %	Non White %
Parent Ed	no	42.9 (9)	88.7 (2)
	some	4.8 (1)	26.1 (6)
	full	52.4 (11)	65.2 (15)
	* Missing (52)		
Drug/Alcohol	no	40.0 (4)	0.0 (0)
	some	30.0 (3)	42.9 (3)
	full	30.0 (3)	57.1 (4)
	* Missing (79)		
Parents Anonymous	no	44.4 (4)	0.0 (0)
	some	22.2 (2)	50.0 (2)
	full	33.3 (3)	50.0 (2)
	* Missing (83)		
Psych Eval	no	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
	some	0.0 (0)	33.3 (2)
	full	100.0 (4)	66.7 (4)
	* Missing (86)		

Table 4: Ethnicity and Compliance to FM Objectives (Continued)

Therapy	no	29.2 (7)	30.0 (6)
	some	29.2 (7)	10.0 (2)
	full	41.7 (10)	60.0 (12)
	* Missing (52)		
Supervise Minor	no	10.5 (2)	0.0 (0)
	some	36.8 (7)	28.6 (4)
	full	52.6 (10)	71.4 (10)
	* Missing (63)		
Safe Home	no	8.3 (2)	0.0 (0)
	some	25.0 (6)	20.0 (4)
	full	66.7 (16)	80.0 (16)
	* Missing (52)		
Med Appointments	no	15.8 (3)	0.0 (0)
	some	31.6 (6)	37.5 (6)
	full	52.6 (10)	62.5 (10)
	* Missing (61)		
Legal/Financial	no	55.6 (5)	50.0 (9)
	some	22.2 (2)	00.0 (0)
	full	22.2 (2)	50.0 (9)
	* Missing (69)		

Table 4: Ethnicity and Compliance to FM Objectives

(Continued)

Corporal Punish	no	15.4 (2)	0.0 (0)
	some	23.1 (3)	16.7 (2)
	full	61.5 (8)	83.3 (10)

* Missing (71)

Cooperate S.W	no	17.2 (5)	14.3 (3)
	some	20.7 (6)	28.6 (6)
	full	62.1 (18)	57.1 (12)

* Missing (46)

* Missing values indicate the number of families not assigned to this objective

DISCUSSION

Overall, this study failed to discern any relationships between the independent and dependent variables identified in the hypothesis. Neither identified strengths, rate of compliance to objectives, ethnicity nor court status were significantly related to outcomes. The following discussion addresses implications of these findings.

Court Status and Compliance to Objectives

There was no significant difference in compliance to objectives between court and non court cases. Apart from a few of the tasks, both groups were comparable in their performance. Perhaps it would be more beneficial to allow more families to remain non court rather than mandating them as court cases. Apart from the obvious empowerment issue and intimidation issues that are involved in non court/court status, the financial implications can not be overlooked. As court mandated cases require the involvement of the judicial system, this involvement certainly incurs extra costs for all systems involved.

Considering the current economic climate and its related budget restraints, this final issue could be examined in further detail. If additional research continues to support

this finding, agencies should consider fully the implications involved with making cases court as opposed to voluntary. Without a doubt much more inquiry and research must occur prior to any dramatic changes in the current system, still the inquiry is needed.

Family Strengths and Disposition

There were no family strengths which related to positive or negative outcome. This result was unanticipated. Why is it that not having certain strengths leads to equal success as those with such strengths? Why isn't there a difference in success? Are the social workers imprecisely measuring strengths or perhaps not including all strengths? If indeed there is no disposition difference among those identified with and without strengths, perhaps the agency could consider the merits of measuring the "strengths". Perhaps, if strengths really are of no import, the more time would be spent on other issues related to the cases.

Case Disposition and Compliance to Objectives

Though no significant difference was found, there was a distinction between the rate of compliance to objectives between the positive family outcomes and the undetermined family outcomes. Overall, the positive outcome group did perform more successfully as anticipated.

Moreover, it is noteworthy that each group reached a minimal success rate of compliance in completing a course of therapy/counseling. Perhaps the goals of therapy were not related to the desired end results sought by clients or the interventions and techniques used to accomplish goals were not defined in explicit and measurable terms. These speculations could be the causes why both groups had a minimal success rate of compliance with the social worker and merit further research.

Ethnicity and Compliance to Objectives

The data collected and illustrated in Table 4 shows a small margin of difference between successful completion of service plan objectives between White and Non-White families. While the data are significant, a larger sample and more in depth research of these questions may yield a clearer picture of the possible significance of these findings.

However, within the confines of this study, it is significant to note that Non-White families were identified as more frequently successfully complying with service plan objectives in all but one of the eleven categories.

The one area where White families were more successful than Non-White families was in complying with psychological evaluations and recommendations. White families received 100% compliance in this area. Perhaps this can be attributed to a

higher emphasis on the importance of psychological and psychiatric consultations Whites families may display. It is possible that cultural factors may impede Non-White families successfully complying with this objective.

For many Non-White families the concern is for maintaining basic of needs such as food and shelter for their families. While psychological/psychiatric recommendations may be seen as less important, when setting priorities these services seemed to be given less emphasis. Also, non-White families tend to utilize less formal means for obtaining the psychiatric\psychological evaluations by using less traditional sources such as the church or other family members.

By contrast, Non-White families demonstrated their highest percentages for most successful compliance in the areas of relieving financial and/or legal difficulties and also in completing drug/alcohol programs and maintaining their sobriety. Again, cultural factors may be attributed to this difference with Non-White families more familiar with confronting the challenges of substance abuse and financial and legal difficulties.

These racial differences may stem from institutional racism and other societal discriminatory factors that contribute to much higher percentages of unemployment, poverty, and possibly child abuse of Non-White families.

Conclusion

This study examined the correlation between previously identified variables with successful completion of assigned objectives. However, it appears that neither identifiable strengths, assigned objectives, ethnicity, or court status had any direct significance on family progress leading to successful program outcome. No significant relationships were found.

As this study consisted of a convenience sample, these results cannot be extrapolated to the general population receiving FM services at the Rancho Cucamonga office nor to the population at large. Future research will be able to consider other types of samples in an effort to bypass this drawback.

An additional limitation to this study was the Family Reassessment sheet which was used to gather most of the information for the study. After collecting the data, it became apparent that this form was very subjective and not completed uniformly nor consistently by all the FM social workers. Because of the inherent subjectivity of the form, it is advised that other more objective data sources be utilized prior to initiating additional research. The authors of this study suggest that direct client interviewing would yield more successful and discernible results.

Findings of this study reinforce the need in social work

practice to continue to search for and/or develop a broad range of potential interventions for abusive or at risk families. As child abuse rates continue to rise, it is of utmost importance that social workers continue to improve their ability to serve this population. Only through extensive, reliable, and contemporary research will practitioners be adequately prepared to assess and meeting the complex needs of this population. This study has attempted to provide at least a beginning point from which other studies can grow.

Appendix A

FAMILY MAINTENANCE PLAN REASSESSMENT

_____ [] Court [] Non-Court

This reassessment is for the following minors _____

A. Plan reassessment date _____ (within 39 days of last (re)assessment date).

Choose One:

B. [] Court: Information contained in _____ court report written _____
Parents provided written summary of reassessment when served with court report. Go to Line H through M on Page 3.

C. [] Court: No SAR within last 3 months. Complete E below to M, Page 3:

D. [] Voluntary: Complete E below to M, Page 3:

E. COMPLIANCE:

Parental compliance with service plan, progress towards achieving objectives and cooperation in keeping appointments:

			SUCCESSFULLY	Parent #1	Parent #2
NO PROGRESS	SOME PROGRESS	COMPLETED	Child #3	Child #4	Child #5
			Child #5	Other #6	
_____	_____	_____	Parent education program.		
_____	_____	_____	Drug, alcohol abuse program and abstinence period.		
_____	_____	_____	Participate in Parent's United/Parent's Anonymous program.		
_____	_____	_____	Obtain psychiatric/psychological evaluation/follow recommendations.		
_____	_____	_____	Complete a course of therapy/counseling.		
_____	_____	_____	Not leave minor unsupervised/develop child care plan.		
_____	_____	_____	Maintain safe and adequate home.		
_____	_____	_____	Keep all scheduled medical, etc. appointments.		
_____	_____	_____	Relieve financial/legal difficulties.		
_____	_____	_____	Refrain from excessive corporal punishment.		
_____	_____	_____	Cooperate and inform DPSS social worker of changes. Keep appointments with social worker.		
_____	_____	_____	Other _____		
_____	_____	_____	_____		
_____	_____	_____	_____		
_____	_____	_____	_____		
_____	_____	_____	_____		
_____	_____	_____	_____		

F. Explanation of factors inhibiting parental compliance; changes in family composition, etc. (Optional)

G. Parent provided verbal/written summary of reassessment on _____
Date

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