Child welfare workers' perspectives on father-daughter attachments and teenage pregnancy

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CHILD WELFARE WORKERS’ PERSPECTIVES OF FATHER-DAUGHTER ATTACHMENTS AND TEENAGE PREGNANCY

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
Ruby Aceves
Dawn Denise Vetro
June 2012
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ABSTRACT

The study investigated Children and Family Services (CFS) workers’ awareness of the importance of father-daughter attachments and the associated risks of teenage pregnancy as well as the use of such knowledge in their intake assessment process. A quantitative, cross-sectional, survey design was utilized to study 113 CFS workers. The study found that CFS workers were familiar with father-daughter attachments and their importance during the intake process. However, very few workers actually implemented that knowledge when creating case plans and intake assessments. Also, CFS workers were unaware of the affects that broken father-daughter attachments had on risk factors for teenage pregnancy. The study recommended that CFS workers should receive trainings on father-daughter attachments and risk factors for teenage pregnancy as well as the importance for implementation in intake assessments and case plans. Further research was recommended to evaluate whether implementation of the knowledge by CFS workers in the case plans enhances father-daughter relationships and ultimately decreases their risk for teenage pregnancy.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to acknowledge Dr. Janet Chang for her expertise and assistance in mentoring us through the research process. Also, a special thanks to Sally Richter for her support while gaining experience at Children and Family Services. Additionally, we would like to thank our MSW colleagues for peer reviewing our measurement tool and proposal.
DEDICATION

I would like to thank the Lord Jesus Christ for blessing me with a wonderful support system of family, friends and colleagues who encouraged me through my educational process. I pray for Aubree, my daughter, and all the female adolescents, to find refuge in their Heavenly Father to ultimately fulfill all of their fatherly attachment needs. - Dawn Vetro

Primeramente quiero darle las gracias a mi mami Linda, Francis. Mami sin tu apoyo y tu ayuda nunca lograría este difícil postgrado. Me has enseñado a ser una mujer fuerte y luchadora igual que tú. No todos los días te doy las gracias por todo lo que has hecho por mí. Pero hoy, en esta manera quiero que sepas cuanto te agradezco todo. Con todo mi amor y respect, Tu güerita.

I would like to acknowledge my son, Orlando Garcia Jr. (Lilo), for always being my inspiration and keeping me focused. I hope my motivation to succeed is instilled within you and I too can inspire you to do great things in life. Because sweetie you can accomplish anything you put your mind to, I am a living proof of that. I love you with all of my heart, Make mommy proud, baby!
I also want to acknowledge Orlando Garcia Senior for helping me realize how strong of a woman I truly am. I never realized how much strength and will power I had to succeed until I was placed in situations I thought would not allow me to continue. I thank you for helping me to learn to overcome those obstacles. Much love!

I would also like to show my appreciation to my big brother, Ruben Aceves. Thank you so much for always being there for me. I’ve always looked up to you as a big brother and father figure. Thank you for your words of wisdom and encouragement when I needed to hear them the most, love you, big brother.

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Last but never least, to all of the teenage mothers like myself who have had to overcome many obstacles in life to succeed, especially those without fathers. As young women, we often look for that affection and
attachment elsewhere, unconsciously seeking our father's affection, as conveyed in this study. Stay strong and know there is always a light at the end of that tunnel.

Thank you, Lord, for giving Dawn and I the strength to finish this program, this has definitely been a long and difficult experience. -Ruby Aceves
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The content of this chapter provides an overview on various topics related to father-daughter attachment and its associated risk factors with teenage pregnancy. Additionally, this chapter examines child welfare workers' assessment approach to the intake process and the policies in place when observing fathers involvement in the lives of their children. Sections will include the study’s problem statement, policy context, the purpose of the study and the significance of the project for social work practice.

Problem Statement

The goal and purpose of the risk assessment process within the child welfare agencies is ultimately to ensure the safety of a child. In addition, the welfare workers are assessing the child and family risk factors; the workers rate the possibility of reunification, view the family strengths and connect them to possible resources (English & Pecora, 1994). A current initial assessment approach being utilized by child protective service (CPS) agencies is the risk assessment tool that was introduced in 1987 in
response to an overwhelming number of child abuse and neglect cases (English & Pecora 1994). This method was implemented in order to improve the competence of services as well as to reduce the number of referrals to be intervened upon. As stated hen child welfare workers make assessments, they look at various risk factors. However, father-daughter attachment isn’t regarded. It is unclear if the child welfare workers are aware of father-daughter attachments and its importance in the assessment process.

Attachment plays a significant role in a child’s development. The relationships and attachments parents have with their children serve as a basis for all future relationships (Lesser & Pope, 2007; Page, 2011). Over the years, research has mainly focused on studying the mother-child attachments and lacked the father-child attachments (Newland & Coyl, 2010). Studies have shown that infants who develop positive attachments with their fathers have better functioning attachments to others (Allen & Daly, 2002). The lack of attachment between fathers and daughters places children at risk for teenage pregnancy. The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy (2011) stated that teenage girls with absent fathers are twice as probable to be sexually active as well as seven times as probable to
become pregnant than peers in a mother and father household.

Adolescent pregnancy began emerging as a national social problem in the 1960's (Crosson-Tower, 2009). This issue increased the need to support the fatherless children as the educational and career options decreased for these adolescent single mothers and the dependency for welfare assistance increased (Crosson-Tower, 2009). The children of these teen moms are more likely to become pregnant than their peers who grow up with both a mother and father in the home. As stated in Centers for Disease and Control Prevention (2011), teens that become pregnant at a young age are more likely to live in a low socio-economic status and are less likely to receive a high school diploma or G.E.D. subsequently; their children are at higher risk of repeating the cycle.

This issue has been around for many years and continues to negatively affect pregnant adolescents, their children and the general public (Crosson-Tower, 2009). There is a need to explore teen pregnancy in more depth to gain knowledge an understanding as to what other unrevealed factors contribute to this social issue, especially to those teens in the child welfare system. Based on the
collective research and information, the teenage adolescents most vulnerable to pregnancy are those already at risk in the child welfare system (Max & Paluzzi, 2006).

As studies have suggested that a lack of relationship attachment between the father and daughter increases the risk for early sexual activity that can lead to teen pregnancy (Ellis et al., 2003; Freeman & Almond, 2010; Robbins, Kaplan & Martin, 1985; Whiteley & Brown, 2010). Child welfare workers' knowledge of this can be enhanced by way of studying the importance of such attachments as they evaluate the families they encounter during the initial family assessment process.

**Policy Context**

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HSS) in 1995, children who grow up without fathers were twice as likely to give birth before the age of twenty (Administration for Children and Families, 1996). In observation of this impact, President Clinton initiated the Fatherhood Initiative in 1995. This Act influenced many health and human service agencies to encourage fathers to be active participants in the health and well-being of their children (ACF, 1996). The initiative provided grants
to communities for developments to educate fathers on their children’s needs, highlight their responsibility in the family and also encourage positive behavioral outcomes of children due to father-child interactions (ACF, 1996). This started a trend which enlightened the policy makers to the depravity of healthy father-child relationships.

As the poor father-child relationships increased, it led the United States to formulate the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 that was implemented by President Bush (Rosenberg & Wilcox, 2006). A portion of this Act was to be utilized during the years of 2006 to 2010 to provide government entities and organizations with the funds to implement activities to promote responsible fatherhood (Rosenberg & Wilcox, 2006). This Bill utilized the child welfare abuse and neglect manual to the purpose of informing child welfare workers of the significance and impact a father has in the life of a child. As a result, the responsibility of the worker becomes critical in carefully considering the father’s role in case planning and how it affects the children and the family’s outcome. However, it is unknown whether this is currently being considered by workers during the assessment process. Currently, part of President Obama’s policy goals and daily
key priorities are to work diligently with his cabinet
secretaries and neighborhood partnerships to reduce
unintended pregnancies and promote responsible fatherhood
(Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, 2011)

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate child
welfare workers' views on the relationship between father-
daughter attachment and its risk for teenage pregnancy.
According to Rosenberg & Wilcox (2006) father-
daughter attachments are not being adequately assessed in the child
welfare system, yet these attachments are imperative to the
emotional development of these daughters (Coleman, 2003),
this lack of emotional development perpetuates teen
pregnancy (Robbins, Kaplan & Martin, 1985). The
investigators sought to measure the awareness and use of
attachment by the assigned worker on a particular case plan
once they make an initial assessment and begin the family
maintenance or the reunification process.

This study consisted of a quantitative survey
questionnaire distributed to 403 child welfare workers
among the San Bernardino County child welfare offices.
Participants were asked to respond to the survey questions
about their assessment processes and their use or awareness of attachment when presented with father-daughter cases and its associated risks for teen pregnancy.

In understanding child welfare workers' perspective and assessment processes, the researchers sought to enhance the understanding of the at-risk female youth within the child welfare system. By exploring all aspects of the father-daughter relationships, practitioners are able to implement the proper care upon assessment before the young girls become adolescents. The female clients who are already adolescents have the opportunity to benefit from the practitioners implementing the attachment aspects into their case plans as well. Through the development of programs, these adolescents could build a positive relationship with their father to ultimately decrease their risk for teenage pregnancy.

Significance of the Project for Social Work

The findings of this study sought to specifically assist child welfare social workers in better understanding how father-daughter attachments are related to teen pregnancy. This study promoted awareness to social service workers so they can plan, intervene and provide effective
services to families who have father-daughter members. In turn, those female clients would have less risk for teenage pregnancy.

When applying this study to the generalist intervention process of social workers interactions with families, the research contributes to the assessing and planning phases. In the assessment phase, workers would be able to identify the presence or absence of a father-daughter attachment by highlighting the needs and strengths within that family structure. As the family proceeds to the planning phase, the worker would utilize the S.M.A.R.T. principles (specific, measureable, achievable, realistic and timely) to formulate goals and create interventions to encourage the father-daughter attachment (Hepworth et al., 2010).

With the presentation of this study, the researchers sought to highlight the importance of the already existing policies and programs that are working well for the child welfare families. By providing policy makers with new insight in the value of father-daughter attachments, they could potentially create an avenue to expand on already existing policies to include father-daughter attachments as part of the fatherhood initiative. This could include the
expansion of services to fathers and their daughters within the child welfare agency. Currently, there is limited research in this area of father-daughter attachment in the case planning process of the child welfare system. Therefore, creating awareness and establishing new research on the issue would be beneficial for child welfare workers when assessing families.

The proposed study is relevant to child welfare because addressing the antecedents that exist in the lives of underdeveloped adolescents giving birth to children may be an issue not being assessed. This also highlights the need for further resources and services to be given to father-daughter families with the intentions to prevent teenage pregnancy and promote healthy attachments.

Therefore, the researchers conducted the purposed study to explore if child welfare workers' awareness of the relationship between father-daughter attachments and the associated risks of teenage pregnancy modify their use of knowledge in the CFS intake assessment process.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Within this chapter, the researchers review literature pertaining to how father-daughter attachments are utilized within the child welfare system to assist in decreasing teen pregnancy. Specifically, the theory guiding the conceptualization of this study is the attachment theory in relation to father-daughter attachments. Literature will be presented to show how father-daughter relationships affect teen pregnancy as well as the current utilization of child welfare assessments and programs.

Theories Guiding Conceptualization

Previous literature on father-daughter attachment and its importance has been scarce. Moreover, little has been studied on father-daughter attachments utilizing the attachment theory (Punyanunt-Carter, 2002). The attachment theory has focused on the maternal-child attachments; the current study seeks to utilize the aspect of father-daughter attachment using the same framework (Bowlby, 1982, 1988). Bowlby suggested that attachment theory refers to "the propensity of human beings to make strong affectional
bonds to particular others" (as cited in Punyanunt-Carter, 2002, p. 201). Bowlby articulates that the bonds a child and a caretaker possess develop into prototypes for other relationships.

Thomas (2010) stated that attachment amongst humans was a significant factor in the psychological development and personality of a person, especially because the human species was born to seek relationships. The study continued to note that whatever was learned through the earliest attachment relationship as a child, would be carried into adult life and constitute how learning and experience would take place as an adult. Therefore, the attachment theory can best be applicable to distinguish the relationship of father-daughter connections. As those daughters attach to their fathers in a healthy way, they are more likely to develop healthy relationships with other males as adults.

Hazan and Shaver (as cited in Punyanunt-Carter, 2002) highlighted adult attachments in relevance to Bowlby's theory. They focused on the child-adult attachments and revealed how it influenced future attachments as adults. The three attachment styles for adults include; secure, avoidant, and anxious/ambivalent. According to the attachment theory, secure adults are considered optimistic,
with a positive outlook of themselves as well as positive perceptions of others. Secure attachment styles are able to form positive relationships with people. The avoidant attachment style is considered to be mistrusting, afraid of intimacy with others and the person can be a pessimist. The anxious/ambivalent style was considered to consist of individuals who sought intimacies but tend to have negative perceptions and not be confident within themselves. The above mentioned attachment styles are of great utilization in the understanding of which style is imitated by female adolescents when they become adults, if they lack positive bonding connections with their fathers as children.

A qualitative study by Freeman and Almond (2010) used a mixed methods approach with undergraduate samples in order to assess reliance of father support such as attachment, intimacy and companionship. Data was also taken from 10 participants interviews in order to learn how strong father- daughter attachment was, or if the daughters held a high or low reliance on their fathers as a primary attachment. The study found via a sequence of hierarchical regression analyses that young girls who were more attached to their fathers at a young age had lower levels of sexual activity. The study also revealed that they were less
likely to be intimate with romantic partners as adolescents.

East, Jackson, and O'Brien (2007) conducted a qualitative study to identify the experiences of adult women who were raised in a father absent environment, without the opportunity of attachment to a father figure. The study interviewed 9 women aged 21 and older by the use of phenomenological interviews. The interviews lasted between 60-120 minutes and focused on their experience with lack of father attachment. The findings of this study revealed that father absence or lack of possible attachment strongly influenced their life path. The study further reasoned with prior research done by Wade (as cited in East, Jackson, and O'Brien, 2007) stating that children of absent fathers experience feelings of abandonment, shame, and anger, which negatively affect and shape their lives as adults. Interestingly enough, 7 of the 9 women in the study described having good, loving, and fulfilling attachments with their mother. Still, the lack of attachment with their fathers was not lessened due to the stronger mother-daughter attachments. Again, an agreement with regard to Wade (1995) stated that a positive connection with others does not fulfill the emotional emptiness and unworthiness
in children who have no paternal attachment (East et al., 2007).

Coley and Chase-Lansdale (2000) conducted a study on 300 Chicago female headed households of low income families. That consisted of African American adolescent girls ages 15-18 years old. They presented the questions of how father-daughter relationships were conveyed emotionally and how the paternal disengagement affected these daughters. They conducted face to face interviews and mailed questionnaires. The results revealed that just having a father present in their lives did not help their well being. The disengaged fathers were found to be more emotionally distant from their daughters, creating a sense of anxiety and behavior problems for the girls. They found that there was a connection between adolescent functioning and the quality of father-daughter attachments, most significantly, for the girls who had a primary father figure (Coley & Chase-Lansdale, 2000).

A quantitative study presented by Coleman (2003), examined three aspects of attachment. Primarily, Coleman (2003) compared securely and insecurely attached children in relation to their parents to measure the effects of their attachments. Second, gender specific attachment was
also measured and its effects on social interaction to seek gender differences among attachment. Last of all, mother and father attachments and the connection to the victimization of peers was also examined to assess the effects on the children. Attempting to pursue these ideas, the researcher recruited 31 female and 36 male fifth and sixth graders to complete a 30 to 45 minute questionnaire. Results revealed girls who were more securely attached and had healthier attachments to their mothers obtained improved attachments to peers. Father and child attachment was affected positively by how the children thought, felt and behaved socially, especially in girls who were securely attached. The study additionally found that other components may have been involved with children who were victims of bullying that are not merely affected by parental attachment. Overall, researchers found that father-daughter attachments had a positive effect on girls socially, especially for the girls who were securely attached to their fathers.

Michiels, Grietens, Onghena, and Kuppens, (2010) presented mother and father attachments with sons and daughters who were in fourth to sixth grade. They were particularly interested in testing how the father
attachment affected their children's psychosocial development. Also, discovering the gender differences in attachment were of interest to the researchers. The sample consisted of 552 girls and boys from Belgium. A questionnaire was administered to teachers, mothers, fathers and students who participated. Results revealed that both parents showed more affection to their daughters, in comparison to their sons. Paternal supportiveness showed more emotional regulation for children at a young age compared to mothers. Therefore, research suggested that a child would be more emotionally secure if their fathers were involved in their child's lives.

Gamble and Roberts (2005) utilized a quantitative study that examined attachment insecurity among parents and adolescents. Researchers sought to explore adolescents' views of their primary caregivers and the relation to their risks of emotional grief due to insecure attachments. The researchers recruited 77 females and 57 male students, ninth through twelfth grade from a U.S. high school. The majority of the participants were Caucasian had come from married homes and recognized their primary caregiver as their biological mother. Utilizing quantitative questionnaires, researchers measured main caregiver
attachment, adolescents' self-esteem and attitude as well as parenting styles used in the home. Investigators results revealed that insecure parent-child attachments stemmed from parents having negative critical views of their adolescents. These attachments were directly related to the adolescents' lower self-esteem and they reported to have greater concern about abandonment. In addition, only female adolescents were found to have greater discomfort with intimacy from this insecure attachment. Researchers suggest that broken parent-child relations contribute to adolescents' negative feelings of self-worth. Authors expressed a need for additional research to explore mother-adolescent attachments separate from father-adolescent attachments in relation to their contributions to the youth's emotional security.

Page (2011) complimented attachment theory presented by Bowlby (1982, 1988) with additional contributions in relations to social work treatment. The writer summarized that attachment is an emotional survival skill needed by all humans equally. Starting at infancy, attachment provides security in an emotional bond where the caregiver's response affects a child's entire life span in their relation to others. Children with inconsistent
responses from caregivers develop an internal view of themselves as unlovable. Feelings of separation and loss are cultivated and children are more likely to attach in disoriented and unpredictable ways. The author illustrated that this way of bonding is most prevalent among maltreated children, which is an important factor in understanding attachments of children in the child welfare system. These insecure, apprehensive children react upon their need for healthy attachments and are often viewed by social workers and foster parents as having behavioral problems. These attachment types do put these children at an intense risk for having self injurious and conduct or dissociative disorders. The underlying issue is treatment for the clients' attachment issues within the social work profession. In the clinical realm, the therapist assists the child in viewing current relationships in a way that highlights their protective capacity. As well as teaching the child to cope with unresponsive relationship bonds so it doesn't continue to affect them tragically. The writer emphasizes the importance for social work professionals to be trained and founded upon attachment theory. Social workers have an important responsibility to these
vulnerable children and they must be making wise decisions while keeping the child’s attachment figures in mind.

Social workers, as well as other practitioners, are challenged to gain knowledge and partake in the assistance in the needs of father absenteeism and lack of attachment to their children. The impact and ramifications involved with such issues are profound. Therefore, developing supportive strategies is of great importance to improve the outcomes of children who lack attachments to their fathers (East, Jackson, & O'Brien, 2007).

Relationship Between Fathers and Daughters and the Effect on Teen Pregnancy

Most studies that seek to decrease adolescent teen pregnancy begin examining the participants in early to middle adolescence. Studies similar to Amin, Browne, Ahmed and Sato (2006) sought to implement programs to help teens who are already parents. Discovering the antecedents and early family elements that affect teen pregnancy and place these adolescents at risk becomes difficult without previous studies. As stated in recent findings by Whiteley and Brown (2010), those adolescents who lack encouraging and attentive parents become at risk for teenage pregnancy.
Ellis et al. (2003) examined the antecedents to teen pregnancy in correlation to father absence. The researchers conducted two longitudinal studies. The first consisted of 242 girls from ages 5 to 18 years old in the United States. The second study consisted of 520 girls from New Zealand from infancy to 18 years of age. Both studies examined the timing of the absence of biological fathers and if their absence increased the risk for daughters to become pregnant and become sexually active at an early age. Through questionnaires and mother interviews measuring the multi-dimensions of the daughter’s development, the researchers found a strong relation between father absence and teenage pregnancy. They found that girls who had absent fathers at a young age in the U.S. were five times more probable to have an adolescent pregnancy compared to New Zealand where the girls were only three times as likely. The researchers recommend future social policies to encourage the fathers to stay present in their daughter’s lives to lower their pregnancy risks.

Quinlan (2003) sought to measure the effects and timing of parental separation and how father’s absence affects daughter’s reproductive development. The researcher analyzed data from The National Survey of Family Growth. It
was reported that there were 10,847 U.S. women aged 15 to 44 years of age in the sample. Twelve variables were measured from the data, ultimately, the research required results from the female's first sexual encounters; first menstrual cycle, first pregnancy, what age their parents separated and what type of parental care was given. Results indicated that parents who separated between their daughters' birth to 6 years of age, placed the daughters at greater risk for early pregnancy. They were twice as likely to have an early menstrual cycle and were four times more likely to be sexually active at an early age. Early separation of parents also indicated early reproductive development in daughters that can potentially lead to early teen pregnancy.

A qualitative descriptive phenomenological study was conducted by Burns (2008). The study sought to measure the connections between teenage mothers and their fathers in regards to the early onset of becoming sexually active and ultimately, becoming pregnant. This study examined not only the physical absence of fathers but also the emotional absenteeism and how it predisposes young females to become pregnant. The study consisted of 10 teenage mothers; five African American, and five Caucasian. The subjects ranged
in age from 16-19, six were 18 years old or older. Two mothers had two children, seven of the teen mothers had one child, and one had a child and was pregnant with her second. The study found three main perceived ideas of the subjects, "the vision of a perfect father," "the desire to attach to an adult male," and "the pondering of what men's intentions are." These were factors that affected their behaviors in predisposition to pregnancy. The study suggested that the lack of positive father-daughter attachments was correlated to the disposition of young females at higher risk of becoming young mothers.

Tessman (as cited in Burns, 2008) stated that the conscious and unconscious internalized visions of a father figure to a young female are distorted when he is absent. These ideas can be damaging in various ways and are due to the lack of unhealthy processing of loss and grievance by the young female daughter. Therefore, as suggested by the author, their feelings of their fathers can consequently disrupt the development of their healthy processing. This results in risk taking behaviors consisting of early sexual activity and teenage pregnancy.

Robbins, Kaplan and Martin (1985) conducted a quantitative, landmark study to analyze the antecedents of
teen pregnancy in adolescents. They surveyed 2,158 seventh
grade students in Texas. The researchers discovered
numerous antecedents in the females of the study who were
more at risk for teenage pregnancy. Two of those factors
were father absence and family stress. It was also found
that teen pregnancy risk factors in female students were
different than those in male students. Male students who
impregnated their girlfriends were not at risk from
father's absence or family stress. Even though this study
is older, the findings are similar to that of a more recent
study (Ellis et al., 2003). This presents to the
researchers of the current study the need to explore this
area, giving to the literature more recent information.

Child Welfare Assessment, Implementation
and Intervention Programs

Child welfare assessments are necessary when analyzing
a family's needs and implementing them through intervention
programs. There are numerous methods used by social workers
to assess different levels of need and care in the child
welfare system. The risk assessment method that is utilized
by child protective services (CPS) is made up of five
system approaches: the Matrix approach, Empirical
predictors' method, Family assessment scales, the Child at
Risk Field system (CARF) and lastly, the Expert systems (English & Pecora, 1994).

The matrix approach is composed of a series of factors that are rated in relation to the risk and severity associated with a client. The descriptive scales are used as particular focus points to examine severity or frequency of abuse, age of the child, perpetrator accessibility to child, and substance abuse. The empirical predictors’ method encompasses the identification of risk factors associated with the characteristics of the child, family, and history of predicting events that may cause harm to the child. The family assessment scale approach is comprised of assessing household functioning levels of children and their families. The CARF implements an ecological perspective and is arranged to apply the child, parent, family, and intervention. This allows for workers to recognize influences of possible risk that is occurring within the scope of the family unit. The expert systems approach is composed of artificial intelligence skills of technological computer use. This approach is established on a foundation that is developed based on the opinion of experts in the CPS system that assist in the development of
decision making procedures (English & Pecora, 1994). The five risk assessment models mentioned assist in the structuring of intervention and evaluation procedures needed by social workers to properly assist their clients. The responsibility and accountability placed on social workers remains highly important in the lives of children as it may negatively affect their development.

In the assessment process, families with poor father-daughter attachments could fall on either sides of the risk assessment spectrum. Researchers have noted that the risk assessment approach is indeed, a great assessment tool in determining high-risk intervention cases (Marshall, Charles, Kendrick, & Pakalniskiene, 2010). However, researchers suggested that there was a gap in services to clients in need who were not considered high risk because they were not being offered any resources. As a result of lack in services, in 2004, the British Columbia Ministry of Child and Family Development (BCMCFD) revised the CPS standards and policies which led to the implementation of a differential response model titled, the Family Development Response (FDR). This application emphasized collaboration between families and community based services that were aimed at assisting what were considered to be low risk
cases (Marshall, Charles, Kendrick, & Pakalniskiene, 2010). Whether families are on the low or high spectrums of risk, services for father-daughter attachments should be important to encourage those bonds and lower the potential risks for teenage pregnancy.

In a qualitative study conducted by O'Donnell, Johnson, D'Aunno, and Thornton (2005), caseworkers' perspectives on fathers involvement in child welfare was examined to explore if father-daughter relationships were considered. The data was collected via the analysis of 5 focus group discussions that consisted of about 5 to 11 participants. Workers for the study were those who had provided services in the areas of teen parents, family preservation and foster care. There were similar perceptions involved in the study regarding the child welfare workers' views on the involvements of fathers. Six major ideas dominated the discussion within the groups. Workers perspectives ranged from the following: fathers are secondary to the child welfare system, the system treats fathers more severely than mothers, fathers mistrust and avoid the child welfare system, mothers obstruct father's involvement in child welfare interventions and many fathers have little to no commitment with their children. Due to
workers' views on fathers, the workers stated that fathers' involvement was extremely minimal at approximately 10%. The workers seemed to stigmatize the fathers unknowingly with the reasons why they weren't involved. Most of the participants were reluctant to address the underlying reasons why a father wouldn't participate in the case plans. With the information gathered from this study, researchers found that the workers dealing with these families might have a better outcome from the fathers if they cared about the underlying reasons. This careful consideration on the parts of the workers could encourage the father's to form attachments with their children.

In an effort to implement a program for father's involvement, Rosenberg and Wilcox (2006) released an addition to the child abuse/neglect manual titled The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children. This was meant for workers to be aware of the value of fathers to children; understand the importance of fathers to the case planning process, recognize the issues unique to fathers, effectively involve fathers from assessment through case closure and work with fathers in all types of family situations. More specifically, the manual stated that during the assessment process, the
father and child relationship should be considered. The writers stated that having the father’s presence when the children are younger lowers the risk of maltreatment and potentially other risks as well. The authors also stated that fathers who are involved are more likely to have emotionally stable children. Through this initiative, fatherhood programs were developed nationwide to establish a bond between fathers and their children. Programs such as the "Fathers and Children Together" (FACT), work at promoting father relationships with their children who are incarcerated. Another program such as the "Dads Make a Difference" (DMAD), was implemented in 1994 to be placed in middle school curriculum to promote the positive involvement of fathers. The program was aimed at assisting adolescent youth in knowing the importance of sex education, and assisted in helping them understand the importance of being a parent (Rosenberg & Wilcox, 2006).

As the literature revealed through the CPS assessment processes and father initiative programs there is a continued need for fathers to be more involved. As well as for fathers to contribute to the decreasing of their children’s possible risk factors. Social workers, who gain knowledge specifically of how and why father-daughter
attachments during the assessment process are significant, can indeed assist in enhancing the services offered to families.

Summary

In summary, this chapter discussed the literature as it pertained to father-daughter attachments and how they should be utilized within the child welfare system to assist in decreasing teen pregnancy. The attachment theory was presented as the conceptualization of this study was examined. Also, teen pregnancy in relation to father-daughter relationships, current assessment practices and father program initiatives in the child welfare system were explored.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

Within this chapter, the following will be discussed: study design, sampling, the process of data collection and instruments utilized. In addition, the research procedures, the efforts made to protect the human participants and an analysis of the data.

Study Design

The purpose of this study was to explore child welfare workers' perspectives on the relationship between father-daughter attachments and its associated risk for teenage pregnancy. The study examined how child welfare workers use the knowledge of the intake assessment process. In examining the topic, the researchers inquire how social workers perceive antecedents affecting adolescents in becoming pregnant. This study utilized a quantitative, cross-sectional, survey design using self-administered questionnaires. The independent variable was the child welfare workers' awareness of the relationship between the father-daughter attachment and its associated risks of teenage pregnancy. The dependent variable was the use of
the knowledge in the intake assessments. This research method was appropriate for this study because it was the most viable way to evaluate several variables amongst a given population at a particular point in time. The use of a survey design minimized invasiveness of participants compared to performing formal interviews as the participants remained anonymous. In addition, the questionnaire was rapidly distributed and inexpensive in comparison to conducting interviews with each participant.

The utilization of self-administered questionnaires may have been one of the limitations within this study. When participants responded to the questions, they may have found it difficult to answer truthfully if they felt inclined to present a socially acceptable reply. Dishonest responses would then distort the results of the study. Therefore, the researchers were aware of the possibility for bias when constructing generalizations about the outcomes of the study. Another limitation of the study may have been the lack of valid measurement scales available to the researchers. The surveys administered were designed by the researchers; therefore, its reliability and validity may not have been as viable.
The purposed study explored child welfare workers' awareness of the relationship between father-daughter attachments and the associated risks of teenage pregnancy, potentially modifying their use of knowledge in the CFS intake assessment process.

Sampling

The sample consisted of 113 child welfare workers who were employed with San Bernardino County Children and Family Services (CFS) in California. The sampling criteria for the study included child welfare workers who were either, intake workers, case carriers or supervisors. These child welfare workers were chosen as potential participants due to their experience in utilizing the assessment tool in the intake process. Participants who were surveyed ranged in regards to: age, education, CFS worker experience, occupation title, area of client services, gender, and ethnicity. Upon written authorization from the CFS director, the survey was distributed to 403 CFS workers. The researchers anticipated at least 100 employees to participate in the study.
Data Collection and Instruments

The data for this study was collected by self-administered questionnaires (Appendix B). The questionnaire was composed up of several standardized scales as well as demographic information pertinent to the study. Participants were asked about their perspectives and experience of parental-daughter attachment and its risk for teen pregnancy. Workers were also asked about their experience with teenage pregnancy cases. The demographics included; gender, age, ethnicity, education, job position, area of client service and years of CFS employment experience. The independent variable was the child welfare workers' awareness of the relationship between the father-daughter attachment and its associated risks of teenage pregnancy. The dependent variable was the use of the knowledge in the intake assessments. Child welfare workers' awareness of father-daughter attachment and teen pregnancy were all presented utilizing ordinal and nominal levels of measurement. Demographics were presented utilizing nominal, ordinal and ratio levels of measurement.

The researchers developed a self-report instrument to measure welfare workers' levels of awareness in intake assessments, mother and father attachments and their level
of experience with pregnant teenagers on their case loads. The creation of this instrument was necessary as there was no measurement designed to assess all the components the researchers sought to measure. The measurement was pretested using fellow colleagues who did not participate in the study to test the measurements validity and reliability. The likely strengths of this instrument were the ability to measure welfare workers’ awareness on attachments and teen pregnancy in the assessment process, which had not yet been examined. A potential limitation to the recently created instrument is the unknown validity and reliability.

Procedures

The researchers conducted the proposed study after a CFS agency and Institutional Review Board (IRB) gave written approval. The cover letters, informed consent forms, self-administered questionnaires, and debriefing statements were copied and prepared for disbursement. The copies were attached with self-addressed stamped envelopes and distributed to six San Bernardino County CFS offices via interoffice mail to employee mailboxes. Data collection was conducted from January through February of 2012. The
data was analyzed in March 2012 and results were written up and presented in April 2012. The collection of data took place at the department of Children Services office located at 1504 Gifford Street San Bernardino California. 92415-0021. Participation for this study was solicited by providing information about the study to the participants via cover letter (Appendix B) that was provided with the questionnaire (Appendix A). As voluntary participants, they were informed in writing that they may choose to withdraw their participation at any time after they began to fill out the questionnaire. In addition, the participants were also informed that their answers would remain confidential. The participants were then prompted to voluntarily consent to take the questionnaire and were provided with a consent form (Appendix C). Upon marking the consent form, participants were then asked to complete the questionnaire which should have taken no longer than ten minutes. When the participants were finished with the questionnaire they were provided with a debriefing statement (Appendix D).

Protection of Human Subjects

All preventative measures were taken in order to safeguard the confidentiality of the participants. First,
the researchers did not obtain any identifiable personal information. For purposes of eliminating any identifiable information, participants were required to use a check mark on consent forms, rather than providing signatures. Participants were informed that their answers would remain confidential and that their participation would be completely voluntary. They were also informed that they could withdraw their participation at any time during the questionnaire. When finished, the participants were provided with a debriefing statement that outlined the purpose of the study. Lastly, the data was kept confidential throughout the study by placing the files in a classified location. The only individuals who had access to the data were the researchers, Ruby Aceves and Dawn Vetro, and their research advisor, Professor Janet Chang. Once surveys were received, they were identified by subject number and the data was then entered into a statistical analysis computer program. When the study was completed, the questionnaires and the data were destroyed.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed by utilizing demographic data analysis methods and techniques. Descriptive statistics
included frequency distribution, measures of central tendency (ex. mean) and measures of variability (ex. standard deviation) would be utilized to describe the characteristics of the participants and the variables of interest. Inferential statistics such as Chi-square tests were employed to make an inference as to the relation between awareness of father-daughter attachments and the associated risks of teenage pregnancy (independent variable) among child welfare workers, and the use of their knowledge in assessments (dependent variable). Variables were employed as applicably appropriate to efficiently assess associations. These associations included parental daughter attachment awareness amongst workers, the actual implementation and use of knowledge related to attachment of parental relationships and the risks for teen pregnancy.

Summary

The purpose of the study was to explore the association between father-daughter attachment awareness among child welfare workers and how these attachments can affect the risk for teenage pregnancy. Ultimately, the findings of this study provided a better understanding of the antecedents related to teenage pregnancy as they
potentially revealed the connections to early attachment. In turn, workers’ increased awareness of father-daughter attachment will better assist this population. As well as provide future developmental factors within the child welfare worker agencies that will assist in lowering teenage pregnancy risk factors.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

This section includes a description of variables used and data analysis results. The variables were inclusive of demographic characteristics, work experience of the participants, as well as an overview of their case work in regards to the teenage pregnant population. Univariate and bivariate descriptive statistics were utilized to describe the variables in the study.

Presentation of the Findings

Table one illustrates the demographic characteristics of the participants. There were 113 participants out of a sample size of 403 surveyed. There was an incongruent amount of female to male ratio, with approximately 89.4% females and 10.6% males. The age range of the participants was 24-61 years old or older with a mean of 44 (SD=11.1). Forty-four percent of the participants were White, 25% were African American, 22% Hispanic, 3% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 6% were other. Over 78% of the participants received a masters degree, 18% completed a college education and 3% received a doctorate degree.
Approximately 69% of the participants had the job title of Social Service Practitioner (SSP). Over 38% of the participants were case workers, 34% were intake workers, 18% were in the "other" job category and 9% were adoption workers. Approximately 60.4% of the workers had about ten years of experience or less.
Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency (n)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>89.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (Mean=44, SD=11.1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-30</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>32.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61 or +</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>White</td>
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<td>44.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
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<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associates Degree</td>
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<td>.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
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<td>78.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate Degree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Title</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>SW II</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSP</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>69.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSSP</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area of Work</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Adoptions</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intake Worker</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Carrier</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>38.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent Unit</td>
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<td>.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1. (Cont’d)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency (n)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years of Work Experience (Mean=109, SD=84) (Months)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-120</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>60.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121-240</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>241-360</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>361 or +</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 presents the work experience of the participants. Over 81% reported that they were either "familiar" or "very familiar" with the intake assessment process. While on the other hand, 19% of the participants reported they were "not familiar" or "somewhat familiar."

Nearly 94% of the participants indicated they were either "familiar" or "very familiar" with parent child attachments. When assessing a family in the intake process nearly 88% of the respondents reported considering this attachment either, "most of the time" or "all of the time."

Nearly 94% of the participants either "strongly agree" or "agree" that mother-daughter attachments are an important part of the intake assessment process. Approximately 96% of the participants "agree" or "strongly agree," that father-
daughter attachment is an important part of the intake assessment process. Nearly 63% of the participants reported that they acknowledged the use of father-daughter attachments in case plans "most of the time" or "all of the time." Over 82% of the participants reported to acknowledge mother-daughter attachments "most of the time" or "all of the time" in developing case plans. More than half of the respondents 58.4% reported that father-daughter attachments have high importance in the assessment process.
Table 2. Work Experience of the Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency (n)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Familiar with Intake Assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not familiar at all</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat familiar</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiar</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very familiar</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>59.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiar with parent-child attachment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat familiar</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiar</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>39.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very familiar</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>54.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment considered in intake process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the time</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some of the time</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>27.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of the time</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>60.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother-daughter attachments are important part of the intake assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>46.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>47.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father-daughter attachments are important part of the intake assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>42.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>53.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgment of father-daughter attachment in case plans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the time</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some of the time</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of the time</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. (Cont’d)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgement of mother-daughter attachment in case plans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the time</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some of the time</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>40.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of the time</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rating of Father-daughter attachment in assessment process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>38.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>58.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 represents the participants’ views on risks for teenage pregnancy and parent-child attachment. Fifty-two percent of the respondents reported they had a child and or teenager become pregnant on their caseload. Approximately 55% of the participants either “strongly agree” or “agree” with the statement, that clients who became pregnant on their caseload had broken attachments with their fathers. Similarly, 56% of the participants either “strongly agree” or “agree” with the statement, that clients who became pregnant on their caseload had broken attachments with their mothers. Over 76% of the respondents either “agree” or “strongly agree” that a lack of positive
father-daughter attachment places daughters at risk for teen pregnancy. In addition, over 74% of the participants "agree" or "strongly agree" that a lack of positive mother-daughter attachment places daughters at the same risk.

Table 3. Participants' Views on Risk for Teenage Pregnancy and Parent-Child Attachment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency (n)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child/teenager pregnant on case load</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>52.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>47.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clients who were pregnant had broken attachments to their father</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know/N/A</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clients who were pregnant had broken attachments to their mother</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know/N/A</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. (Cont’d)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency (n)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Risk for teen pregnancy with lack of father-daughter attachment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>29.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>46.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know/N/A</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk for teen pregnancy with lack of mother-daughter attachment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>54.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know/N/A</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bivariate Analysis

Chi-square tests were conducted to assess the relationship between the social workers' awareness of father-daughter attachment and the utilization of that knowledge in assessments. The finding came out to be statistically significant. \( (x^2=40.446, df=12, p<.01) \). Social workers who have the knowledge of father-daughter attachments were more likely to utilize that knowledge in assessments.

There was also a significant relationship between social workers' perspectives on the importance of father-
daughter attachments in the intake process and the application of that attachment in their assessment. The finding came out to be statistically significant. 

\( \chi^2 = 54.116, \text{df} = 12, p < .01 \). Social workers reported that when father-daughter attachments were considered important, workers were more likely to use the knowledge in their assessments.

Chi-square tests were analyzed to compare the relationship between social workers' awareness of mother-daughter attachment and the utilization of that knowledge in assessment. The findings came out to be statistically significant. \( \chi^2 = 45.48, \text{df} = 12, p < .01 \). Social workers who have the knowledge of mother-daughter attachments were more likely to use their knowledge in creating case plans.

There was also a significant relationship between social workers' perspectives on the importance of mother-daughter attachments in the intake process and the application of that attachment in their assessment. The finding came out to be statistically significant. \( \chi^2 = 44.233, \text{df} = 12, p < .01 \). This implies that social workers who look at mother-daughter attachment in the intake assessment were more likely to utilize this information during their intake assessments.
Chi-square tests were performed to examine a relationship between social workers’ awareness of the importance of father-daughter attachments and how it contributes to teen pregnancy. The findings came out to be statistically significant. \( (x^2=25.20, \text{df}=12, p<.05) \). Social workers who are aware of the importance of father-daughter attachments were more likely to understand how the lack of attachment contributes to teenage pregnancy. Therefore, workers should apply this attachment awareness during the intake assessment process in an attempt to decrease teenage pregnancy.

Chi-square tests were also conducted to assess the relationship between social workers’ awareness of the importance of mother-daughter attachments in the intake process and how those attachments contribute to teenage pregnancy. The findings came out to be statistically significant. \( (x^2=22.70, \text{df}=12, p<.05) \). Social workers who are aware of the importance of mother-daughter attachments were more likely to understand how they contribute to the increased risk for teenage pregnancy.

In addition, there was a significant relationship between the social workers clients who were pregnant teens that came from broken attachments with their mothers and
the workers’ awareness of mother-daughter attachment in the intake process. The findings came out to be statistically significant. \( x^2 = 31.07, df = 12, p < .01 \). Social workers are aware of the importance of mother-daughter attachments in the intake process and how if these attachments are broken can lead to teenage pregnancy. This indicates that social workers are in fact addressing mother-daughter attachments in the intake process in an effort to encourage these relationships. However, social workers are not addressing father-daughter attachments in the same capacity leaving these daughters at risk for teenage pregnancy.

Summary

In the content of this chapter, the researchers provided univariate and bivariate descriptive statistics to describe the variables in the study. The univariate statistics were illustrated utilizing tables to demonstrate demographic characteristics, work experience of the participants as well as an overview of their case work in regards to the teenage pregnant population.
CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion of the findings of this study as researchers examined child welfare workers' perspectives on father-daughter attachment and the risk factors associated with teenage pregnancy. Additionally, the chapter will discuss the study's limitations and future recommendations for social work practice, policy and research.

Discussion

This study sampled a total of 113 child welfare workers who were employed in San Bernardino County Children and Family Services (CFS). Surveys were distributed specifically to child welfare workers who had case carrier, intake worker or supervisor experience.

Child welfare workers, who participated in the study, consisted of 101 females and 12 males with an ethnic majority identifying approximately half of the respondents being of Caucasian descent. Most of the participants were middle aged, 44 years old and had attained a master's level education.
More than half of the child welfare participants identified having the job title of Social Service Practitioner (SSP) and 72% were either case carrier workers or intake workers. Approximately 60.4% of the workers had about ten years of child welfare experience or less.

In general, the responses to the surveys were used to measure child welfare workers’ awareness. Specifically, to evaluate workers’ awareness of the relationships between father-daughter attachments and the potential associated risks of teenage pregnancy. Ultimately, the study sought to explore if the use of this knowledge modified the workers’ intake assessment process.

The study found that there was a significant relationship between social workers’ awareness of the importance of father-daughter attachment in the intake process and the application of that attachment in their assessment. Child welfare workers were familiar with father-daughter and mother-daughter attachments and their importance during the intake process. However, participants tended to apply the knowledge of mother-daughter relationships (82%) more than father daughter relationships (63%) in developing case plans.
Child welfare workers seemed to have preconceived notions about mother-daughter attachments. They favored these relationships among clients and it appeared to have guided their assessments. This may be caused by the influence of the Bowlby attachment theory framework. As the theory has focused on the maternal-child attachments and has lacked emphasis on paternal-child attachments (Bowlby, 1982, 1988). In addition, child welfare workers may also lack formal trainings on the importance and effects of father-daughter attachments as well as the need for practice implementation. As stated in a previous study, even though women reported having fulfilling attachments with their mother, these relationships did not replace the emotional emptiness of not having a paternal attachment (East, Jackson, & O'Brien, 2007). Therefore, this highlights the need for child welfare workers to be cognizant of these relationships, their effects and the necessity to apply this knowledge in the intake process.

The study found that there was a significant relationship between social workers’ awareness of the importance of parent-daughter relationships and risk for teenage pregnancy. Social workers are addressing mother-daughter attachments in the intake process in an effort to
encourage these relationships and overall decrease the risk for teenage pregnancy. However, social workers are not implementing the importance of father-daughter relationships that would ultimately decrease risk for teenage pregnancy. As previous studies have suggested, lack of relationship attachment between the father and daughter increases the risk for early sexual activity that leads to teen pregnancy (Ellis et al., 2003; Freeman & Almond, 2010; Robbins, Kaplan & Martin, 1985; Whiteley & Brown, 2010).

Therefore, social workers should be applying their knowledge of father-daughter attachments in an effort to accurately assist these families.

Previous research is lacking in comparative studies of child welfare workers’ awareness and implementation of father-daughter attachment and the increased risk for teenage pregnancy. Previous studies exhibit the correlation between daughters who were more attached to their fathers at a young age, had lower levels of sexual activity and were more emotionally secure (Freeman & Almond, 2010; Michiels et al., 2010). Therefore, child welfare workers are challenged to partake in the assistance of fathers to improve supportive strategies for children who lack these attachments (East, Jackson, & O’Brien, 2007).
Limitations

The primary limitation of the study was the lack of a valid measurement instruments available to the researchers to evaluate father-daughter attachments and its associated risks to teenage pregnancy. The research topic was relatively new, therefore, making it difficult for researchers to discover a valid measure. Therefore, the surveys administered to participants were designed by the researchers, potentially lowering the reliability and validity of the study.

Another limitation was the use of convenience sampling. Researchers were limited in retrieving child welfare worker participants. Given the convenience of location, researchers selected the child welfare workers within the County of San Bernardino. This limitation compromised the generalizability of the research findings. Therefore, the results could not represent all child welfare workers.

Overall, the limitations suggest a need for future research to re-test the reliability and validity of the measurement. As well as survey a larger population of child welfare workers to establish generalizability.
Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy and Research

The goal of this research was to evaluate social workers’ perceptions of the importance and awareness of father-daughter relationships in regards to its association with risk for teenage pregnancy. The study results suggested that most child welfare workers had the awareness and acknowledgment of the connections between fathers and their daughters. However, the results reveal that there is a lack of implementation of that knowledge in case plans and assessments. The findings of the study constructively led to the recommendation that child welfare workers should receive annual formal trainings on the attachment theory that is inclusive of father-daughter attachments. These trainings should consist of the importance and effects of father-daughter attachments, as well as applicable ways to utilize this formal knowledge with this population in the assessment process. Additionally, workers should be trained to acknowledge and apply ways to encourage father-daughter attachments among clients, to decrease the risk of teenage pregnancy.

In addition, as a potential program to facilitate father-daughter attachments and reduce the risk for teenage
pregnancy, CFS can offer father-daughter support groups. This support group would consist of fathers who have daughters and the ability to build positive relationships with those daughters. During these sessions, fathers would be encouraged to learn about the importance of father-daughter relationships, finding age appropriate ways to build those attachments.

As social workers implement their knowledge of father-daughter attachments into their assessments and case plans, they can effectively conduct objective strategies, interventions and provide in depth services to this particular population. If this recommendation was implemented into the child welfare assessment curriculum, a longitudinal study would then be a suggestion for further exploration. Research would need to be conducted in an attempt to evaluate whether or not the implementation of such recommendation would benefit and foster father-daughter relationships, ultimately, decreasing teenage pregnancy risk factors.

Conclusions

The findings of the study indicated that Children and Family Services (CFS) social workers in San Bernardino
County believed they were knowledgeable in regards to the importance of father-daughter attachments. However, the study found that the implementation of such knowledge was not being utilized. Therefore, CFS agencies in San Bernardino County should require CFS workers to implement their knowledge of father-daughter attachments in the intake process to formulate case plans. As a result, implementing the recommended programs will assist in fostering positive father-daughter attachments, ultimately creating a positive impact on the lives of clients as well as their ability to thrive.
APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE
Study of Attachment Awareness
Among Child Welfare Workers

PART I: BACKGROUND
In this section, I would like to ask you a few questions about yourself. Please write or circle your answer. Your responses will remain confidential and anonymous.

1. What is your gender?
   1. Male
   2. Female

2. What is your age? ______________

3. What is your ethnicity?
   1. White
   2. African American
   3. Hispanic
   4. Asian/Pacific Islander
   5. Native-American
   6. Other (Please specify)

4. What is your highest level of education?
   1. High school Diploma
   2. Associates Degree
   3. Bachelors Degree
   4. Masters Degree
   5. Doctorate Degree

5. Which of the following job titles applies to you?
   1. Intake Specialist
   2. Social Worker II
   3. Social Service Practitioner
   4. Supervisor Social Service Practitioner
   5. Other (specify)

6. Which of the following areas best describes where you work?
   1. Adoptions
   2. Intake Worker
   3. Case Carrier
   4. Adolescent Unit
   5. Other (specify)________________________________________

7. What is the length of your employment at CFS? _________ Years _________ months
Part 2: Work Experience
I would like to ask a few questions about your work experience.

8. How much are you familiar with the intake assessment process?
   1 = Not familiar at all
   2 = Somewhat familiar
   3 = Familiar
   4 = Very familiar

9. What is your familiarity with parent-child attachment?
   1 = Not familiar at all
   2 = Somewhat familiar
   3 = Familiar
   4 = Very familiar

10. When assessing a family in the intake process, is attachment (parental relationship) considered?
    1 = None of the time
    2 = Some of the time
    3 = Most of the time
    4 = All of the time
    5 = Don’t Know

11. How much do you agree with the following statement?
    Mother-daughter attachments are an important part of the intake assessment process when a female child is involved
    1 = Strongly agree
    2 = Agree
    3 = Disagree
    4 = Strongly Disagree

12. How much do you agree with the following statement?
    Father-daughter attachments are an important part of the intake assessment process when a female child is involved
    1 = Strongly agree
    2 = Agree
    3 = Disagree
    4 = Strongly Disagree
13. How much attachment between fathers and daughters are acknowledged, when creating case plans

1 = None of the time
2 = Some of the time
3 = Most of the time
4 = All of the time

14. How much attachment between mothers and daughters are acknowledged, when creating case plans

1 = None of the time
2 = Some of the time
3 = Most of the time
4 = All of the time

15. How would you rate the importance of father-daughter attachment in the assessment process?

1 = Low
2 = Moderate
3 = High

Part 3: Cases
I would like to ask a few questions about your case work.

16. Have you had a child/teenager on your caseload become pregnant?
1. Yes 2. No

17. How much do you agree with the following statement?
Of the clients who became pregnant, they had broken attachments with their fathers

1 = Strongly agree
2 = Agree
3 = Disagree
4 = Strongly Disagree
5 = Don’t Know/ N/A

18. How much do you agree with the following statement?
Of the clients who became pregnant, they had broken attachments with their mothers

1 = Strongly agree
2 = Agree
3 = Disagree
4 = Strongly Disagree
5 = Don’t Know/ N/A
19. How much do you agree with the following statement?
Lack of positive father-daughter attachments places daughters at risk for teen pregnancy

1 = Strongly agree
2 = Agree
3 = Disagree
4 = Strongly Disagree
5 = Don’t Know

20. How much do you agree with the following statement?
Lack of positive mother-daughter attachments places daughters at risk for teen pregnancy

1 = Strongly agree
2 = Agree
3 = Disagree
4 = Strongly Disagree
5 = Don’t Know
APPENDIX B

COVER LETTER
Dear CFS Workers,

We are inviting you to complete the attached questionnaire. The purpose of this study is to explore child welfare workers perspectives’ on father-daughter attachment during the intake assessment process. This survey will take about 10 minutes of your time. Participation will benefit CSUSB students, the purposed population and CFS agencies, by increasing research knowledge and awareness.

Please complete and return in the attached, pre-addressed interoffice envelope by February 7th 2012.

Your contribution to this research study is appreciated.

Thank you.

Ruby Aceves
Dawn Vetro
APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT
INFORMED CONSENT

The study in which you are being asked to participate is designed to investigate child welfare workers perspectives on parental attachment and the potential risks associated with pregnancy during the intake process. This study is being conducted by Ruby Aceves and Dawn Vetro under the supervision of Professor Janet Chang at California State University San Bernardino. The study has been approved by the School of Social Work Sub-Committee of the CSUSB Institutional Review Board.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this study is to explore child welfare workers perspectives’ on parental attachments during the intake assessment process and the associated risks with teenage pregnancy.

DESCRIPTION: If you take part in this study, you will be asked to fill out a brief survey that asks about your perspectives on parent child attachments and associated risks of teenage pregnancy during the intake assessment process.

PARTICIPATION: Participation is totally voluntary, and you are free to skip any questions you do not want to answer.

CONFIDENTIALITY: The information you give will remain confidential and anonymous and no record will be made or kept of your name or any identifying information. The anonymous data from these surveys will only be seen by the researchers; the results will be reported in group form only.

DURATION: Filling out a survey should take no more than 10 minutes.

RISKS: There are no foreseeable risks to taking part in the study.

BENEFITS: There is also no direct benefit to participants, yet an indirect benefit to society with potential new knowledge on child welfare workers awareness of attachment.

CONTACT: If you have any questions or concerns about this study you can contact Dr. Janet Chang at (909) 537-5184.

RESULTS: The results will be available in the CSUSB library after December of 2012.

By marking below, you agree that you have been fully informed about this survey and are volunteering to take part.

Place a check mark here ___________________________ Date ________________________________
APPENDIX D

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT
Study of Father Daughter Attachment

Debriefing Statement

This study you have just completed was designed to investigate child welfare workers’ perspectives on the relationship between father-daughter attachments and its associated risk for teenage pregnancy. The study examined how child welfare workers use their knowledge of father and daughter attachments while conducting intake assessments. In examining the topic, the researchers will inquire how social workers perceive antecedents affecting adolescents in becoming pregnant.

Thank you for your participation and for not discussing the contents of the study to other participants. If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact Professor Janet Chang at (909) 537-5184. If you would like to obtain a copy of the results of the study, please contact the above mentioned individual after December of 2012.
REFERENCES


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Lesser & Pope (2007), Human Behavior and the social environment. Pearson Education, Boston, MA


Punyanunt-Carter, N.M. (2002). Using attachment theory to study satisfaction in father-daughter relationships human communication. A Publication of the Pacific and Asian Communication Association, 10, (2) 103-120.


This was a two-person project where authors collaborated throughout. However, for each phase of the project, certain authors took primary responsibility. These responsibilities were assigned in the manner listed below.

1. Data Collection:
   Team Effort: Ruby Aceves and Dawn Vetro

2. Data Entry and Analysis:
   Team Effort: Ruby Aceves and Dawn Vetro

3. Writing Report and Presentation of Findings:
   a. Introduction and Literature
      Team Effort: Ruby Aceves and Dawn Vetro
   b. Methods
      Team Effort: Ruby Aceves and Dawn Vetro
   c. Results
      Team Effort: Ruby Aceves and Dawn Vetro
   d. Discussion
      Team Effort: Ruby Aceves and Dawn Vetro