**Safeguarding children from harm: the availability and comparability of data to facilitate cross-national comparisons**

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**Abstract**

An*Overview of Child Well-being in Rich Countries* (UNICEF, 2007) highlighted that the lack of common definitions and inconsistencies between country’s reporting and classification of child abuse make international comparisons challenging (p.7). The paper will present findings from a recent scoping review which was undertaken to explore the availability and comparability of data on safeguarding children from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and exposure to intimate partner violence in seven countries (Munro et al., 2011). It will explore what data are collected to contribute to an understanding of the prevalence of abuse and neglect and subsequent service responses in different countries. In doing so, it will explore the impact that variations in child welfare legislation, policy and practice have upon what data are collected, at what stage in the child protection process, and the implications such factors have on the comparability and interpretation of data (to avoid drawing erroneous conclusions). The findings will highlight both strengths and limitations in the use of national official datasets to facilitate cross-national comparison of approaches to safeguarding children from harm.

**References**

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