Foster Care Health

Interventions

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Brief History of Foster Care

The foster care system was established in the 20th century after transitioning from "orphanages" in the 1800's.

- In 1980, the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act.

There are over 400,000 children ages 0-21 years old in foster care today.

**Goal:** To provide for the health, safety, and well-being of children and adolescents while fostering reunification or an alternative permanency arrangement when reunification is not possible.

- Average stay in foster care is about 2 years

Similar amounts enter and exit but subpopulation most at risk of poor health outcomes.

______ 20,000 who “Age-out” each year
Let’s take a poll!
Question 1

Nearly one third of foster children will be reunified with their parents.

A. True

B. False
Question 1

Nearly one third of foster children will be reunified with their parents.

A. True

B. False

Actually, about 50% are reunited with parents. Two thirds are either reunified through kinship care, appointed familial guardians or returned to parents.
Question 2

Children that "Age Out" of foster care are more likely to experience PTSD than veterans of War.

A. True

B. False
Question 2

Children that "Age out" of foster care are more likely to experience PTSD than veterans of War.

A. True

B. False

The percentage of children who age out of the foster care system and still suffer from the direct effects of PTSD is 25% (nearly twice as high as the rate documented by U.S. War Veterans).
Question 3

Foster youth are more likely to be sexually abused in foster homes than the family home they were removed from.

A. True

B. False
Question 3

Foster youth are more likely to be sexually abused in foster homes than the family home they were removed from.

A. True

B. False

For children in foster care who have been the victims of sexual abuse, a study found that 37.4% of the perpetrators were institution staff, 36.5% were foster parents, and 20% were relatives of the victims.
Question 4

Almost 80% of incarcerated inmates have spent time in foster care.

A. True

B. False
Question 4

Almost 80% of incarcerated inmates have spent time in foster care.

A. True

B. False

Foster care increases the risk of criminal justice contact and it may exacerbate criminal justice inequality by disproportionate placements of minority children in foster care.
Question 5

About 2/3 of children in foster care have a chronic medical conditions.

A. True

B. False
Question 5

About 2/3 of children in foster care have a chronic medical conditions.

A. True

B. False

About one third of foster youth have a chronic medical conditions, however, long term health outcomes show increased prevalence of mental, emotional and behavioral health deficits for most youth.
Michigan Foster Care

Michigan is ranked 18th in number of children placed in foster care per capita.

13,000 Children in foster care today.

- Peak of 20,000 in 2003
My Story

2002 Placed in Kinship Care
• 2002 Two Foster Homes
• Adopted in 2005
• Failed Adoption
2010

Life After Foster Care
● Healing
● Reconnections
● Adulting
Foster Youth Alumni Advocate

Shadow Day
Verb
To connect face-to-face with one’s Congressional Representative to drive change;
Health Care for Foster Children

Behavioral & Mental Health

• About 60% of foster children under the age of 5 have developmental health issues.
• Roughly 50% of emancipated foster youth have chronic health conditions including visual and auditory impairments, malnutrition, asthma, and dental decay.
• High rates of PTSD.
• Psychotropic medications
  • Co-pharmacy and polypharmacy
  • Secondary antipsychotics
  • 20-50% usage compared to 4% of general population
Implications of Psychotropic Medication

While an increase in mental, emotional & behavioral needs correlate with increased necessity of psychotropic medications, it is important to make sure foster children actually benefit from this treatment.

- Useful for many youth
- Shortcut to treat
- Tool for manipulation, abuse and negligence
Role of Pediatrician

Pediatricians play a role in the health and well being of foster children at multiple stages of the foster care process.

- Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting
- Initial Health Assessment
- Ongoing Care
Implicit Bias in Foster Care Reporting

Foster care to Prison Pipeline

• Research suggests that foster care placement increases the chance of criminal justice contact.

• Almost 80% of inmates incarcerated in our prisons have spent time in foster care.

Furthers Criminal Justice Inequality

• Twenty-eight percent of children entering foster care are black.

• Four times more likely to be reported.
Implicit Bias and The Blind Removal Approach

Excerpt from Ted Talk by Dr. Jessica Pryce
To Report or Not To Report

- In Michigan, 160,065 abuse/neglect complaints
- Roughly, 92,000 investigations
- 25,509 confirmed Abuse/Neglect cases

However, still recommend reporting suspected cases with *mindfulness* and a *heightened awareness of bias*. Truly consider the impact on the child’s life.
Getting Involved

**Patient Care**
- Trauma informed care
- Mindful and unbiased child abuse/neglect reporting
- Psychotropic drug monitoring
- Know reporting laws
- Continue education in maltreatment regulations

**Health Coordination**
- Use of patient record tracking such as databases like IDENTITY and Foster Care Medical Passport
- Connections with CPS workers and patients family
- Referrals to/emulation of Medical Homes

**Advocacy/ Other**
Get involved with programs such as:
- AAP's Council on Foster Care, Adoption, and Kinship Care (COFCAKCI)
- National Foster Youth Institute (MI Chapter)
- Michigan CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate)
- Donate or Foster!
Small gestures can have a big impact.

Julianna Margulies
The Power of
#FosterYouthVoices

Congressmember Pelosi during
“Shadow Day” 2019,
Ted Talk by Lemn Sissay
Questions?
Thank you
References


2. Peter J. Pecora et al., Improving Family Foster Care: Findings from the Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study 1, 1 (Casey Family Programs 2005) and http://www.fostercare2.org/ask-the-pros-2
