

Structured Decision-Making Risk Assessment

Program description:

The Structured Decision Making (SDM) model is a system of assessment tools used at various decision points in the child welfare system. Washington State's child welfare system has implemented the SDM risk assessment tool to classify families on their risk of further child maltreatment. This effect size is specific to Washington's implementation of the risk assessment, and should not be interpreted as a statement on the effectiveness of Structured Decision Making as a whole.

Typical age of primary program participant: 8

Typical age of secondary program participant: N/A

Meta-Analysis of Program Effects

Outcomes Measured	Primary or Secondary Participant	No. of Effect Sizes	Unadjusted Effect Sizes (Random Effects Model)			Adjusted Effect Sizes and Standard Errors Used in the Benefit-Cost Analysis					
						First time ES is estimated			Second time ES is estimated		
			ES	SE	p-value	ES	SE	Age	ES	SE	Age
Out-of-home placement	P	1	-0.006	.02	.69	-0.005	.02	9	-0.005	.02	9

Benefits and costs were not estimated for Structured Decision Making.

Multiplicative Adjustments Applied to the Meta-Analysis

Type of Adjustment	Multiplier
1- Less well-implemented comparison group or observational study, with some covariates.	0.5
2- Well-implemented comparison group design, often with many statistical controls.	0.5
3- Well-done observational study with many statistical controls (e.g., IV, regression discontinuity).	0.81
4- Random assignment, with some RA implementation issues.	0.81
5- Well-done random assignment study.	1.00
Program developer = researcher	0.25
Unusual (not "real world") setting	0.5
Weak measurement used	0.54

The adjustment factors for these studies are based on a multivariate regression analysis of 106 effect sizes from evaluations of home visiting programs within child welfare or at-risk populations. The analysis examined the relative magnitude of effect sizes for studies rated a 1, 2, 3, or 4 research design quality, in comparison with a 5 (see Technical Appendix II for a description of these ratings). We weighted the model using the random effects inverse variance weights for each effect size. The results indicated that research designs 1 and 2 have effect sizes about twice the size of studies rated as a 5, and research designs 3 and 4 have effect sizes about 24 percent higher than a 5.

The analysis also found that effect sizes were statistically significantly higher when the program developer was involved in the research evaluation, or when a weak outcome measure was used.

Studies Used in the Meta-Analysis

Miller, M. (2011, May). *Structured Decision-making risk assessment: Does it reduce racial disproportionality in Washington's child welfare system?* (Document No. 11-05-3901). Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy.