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Assessment of Administrative Data on Elder Abuse, Mistreatment, and Neglect (EAMN)

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Bureau of Justice
Statistics (BJS)
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Problem Statement

Elder Abuse, Mistreatment, and Neglect (EAMN) is a growing concern as the population of elderly persons increases within the United States. Yet uniform and comparative statistics on incidents reported to Adult Protective Services (APS) agencies and related responses are not available nationwide due to widespread variation in states' legal definitions of elder abuse and reporting mechanisms for tracking cases. This lack of uniform data has impeded policymakers' abilities to adequately estimate and track the prevalence of EAMN reported to APS agencies, make comparisons across jurisdictions, and evaluate the effectiveness of responses to EAMN.

Project Purpose

This project is a first, exploratory step toward the creation of a nationwide statistical reporting system that would uniformly track the prevalence of EAMN that has been reported to APS agencies and responses to reported cases.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS)—through its grantee, the Urban Institute's Justice Policy Center—is assessing the feasibility of using existing data from APS agencies as the basis of a nationwide EAMN statistical reporting system. This project examines the extent to which APS agencies collect and maintain a common set of information about EAMN cases, as well as agency capacity to report statistical information about these cases.

Project Activities

- An **online survey of state and local APS agencies** is scheduled for early 2014 and collects information on:
 - The specific scope of abuse reports that APS agencies respond to;
 - What types of individual-level case records APS agencies maintain (e.g., reports of suspected abuse, case investigations, case outcomes);
 - Victim-, perpetrator- and case-level characteristics that are maintained within APS agencies' record-keeping systems; and
 - Technical assistance and resources needed to participate in a nationwide statistical data collection.
- In preparation for the online survey, we are conducting **telephone interviews with state APS representatives** to verify our background research.

Project Results

The study's final report, scheduled for December 2014, will provide an overview of APS agencies' practices on detecting, reporting, and collecting data on EAMN. Specifically, the report will:

- Describe current data collection practices across states, including the processes by which EAMN cases are reported and types of data collected by APS agencies;
- Identify commonalities in reporting practices and data availability across states, as well as highlight gaps in key information; and
- Give recommendations to BJS on the feasibility and challenges of implementing a national EAMN data reporting system.

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