Children's Hospital of Philadelphia PolicyLab

Association Between Neighborhood Greenspace and Child Protective Services Involvement

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Background: Child maltreatment and child protective service (CPS) involvement negatively impacts families, and disproportionately impact families of color. Urban neighborhood greenspace is associated with improved mental health and decreased community violence, however correlations between greenspace and CPS involvement have not been evaluated.

Objective: To examine the association between greenspace and CPS involvement.

Methods: This is a secondary analysis of City of Philadelphia CPS report data from 2008 to 2018. Logistic regression was used to determine associations between greenspace and 3 CPS outcomes (substantiated reports, cases accepted for CPS services, and foster care placements) at the census block level, adjusting for sociodemographic information and area deprivation index, a composite measure combining education, employment, housing, and poverty characteristics at the census block group level. 13,336 census blocks were included, which had key exposure, covariate, and outcome data, and had a child population of at least 1.

Results: 66,043 CPS reports were included. In the adjusted model, compared to blocks with >30 % greenspace, blocks with <10 % greenspace had 1.52 times the odds of a substantiated report (95 % CI 1.30-1.76, $p < 0.001$) and 1.52 times the odds of a case accepted for CPS services (95 % CI 1.30-1.77, $p < 0.001$). Blocks with less greenspace had increased odds of foster care placement than blocks with >30 % greenspace, however the correlation was less strong.

Conclusion: Increased density of neighborhood greenspace is associated with decreased risk of substantiated child maltreatment and cases accepted for CPS services, suggesting that greenspace may confer protection against CPS involvement.

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