

Adolescents with mental health-related hospitalisations: 40% had prior reported allegations of maltreatment

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Our aim

To examine mental health-related hospitalisations for adolescents aged 12-17 by levels of Department for Child Protection contact between the ages of 0-11.

What we did

Data source: De-identified linked data from the Better Evidence Better Outcomes Linked Data (BEBOLD) platform – birth registrations, perinatal birth records, Department for Child Protection data and public hospital inpatient hospitalisations.

Population: Children born in South Australia, 1991-1999 (n=175,115)

Exposure: Highest level of contact with the Department for Child Protection (DCP) from ages 0-11 in mutually exclusive groups ordered from lowest to highest level of intervention:

DCP contact	Definition
Notification	A report made to DCP concerning suspected child abuse, neglect or significant risk of harm.
Screened-in	A term used to indicate whether the situation described by the notifier is of sufficient concern to warrant investigation by DCP.
Investigation	The process in which DCP obtains detailed information about a child who is the subject of a notification.
Substantiation	A notification where there was reasonable cause to believe that a child was likely to be or had been maltreated.
Out-of-home care (OOHC)	Children considered unable to live safely at home may be removed from their family and placed in OOHC (e.g. foster, kinship or residential care).

Outcome: Mental health-related hospitalisations at ages 12-17, including substance use disorders, stress-related disorders and self-harm.

ICD-10-AM codes: F10-F19, F20-F29, F30-F39, F40-F48, F50-F59, F60-F69, F70-F79, F80-F89, F90-F98, F99, G47.0-G47.2, G47.8, G47.9, R44, R45, O99.3, X60-X84, Y87.0.

What we found

15.5% of young people had prior contact with the Department for Child Protection by age 11.



As the level of Department for Child Protection contact increased, the proportion of adolescents with a mental health-related hospitalisation increased – from 2.3% of adolescents with no contact to 17.5% of adolescents who had experienced out-of-home care.

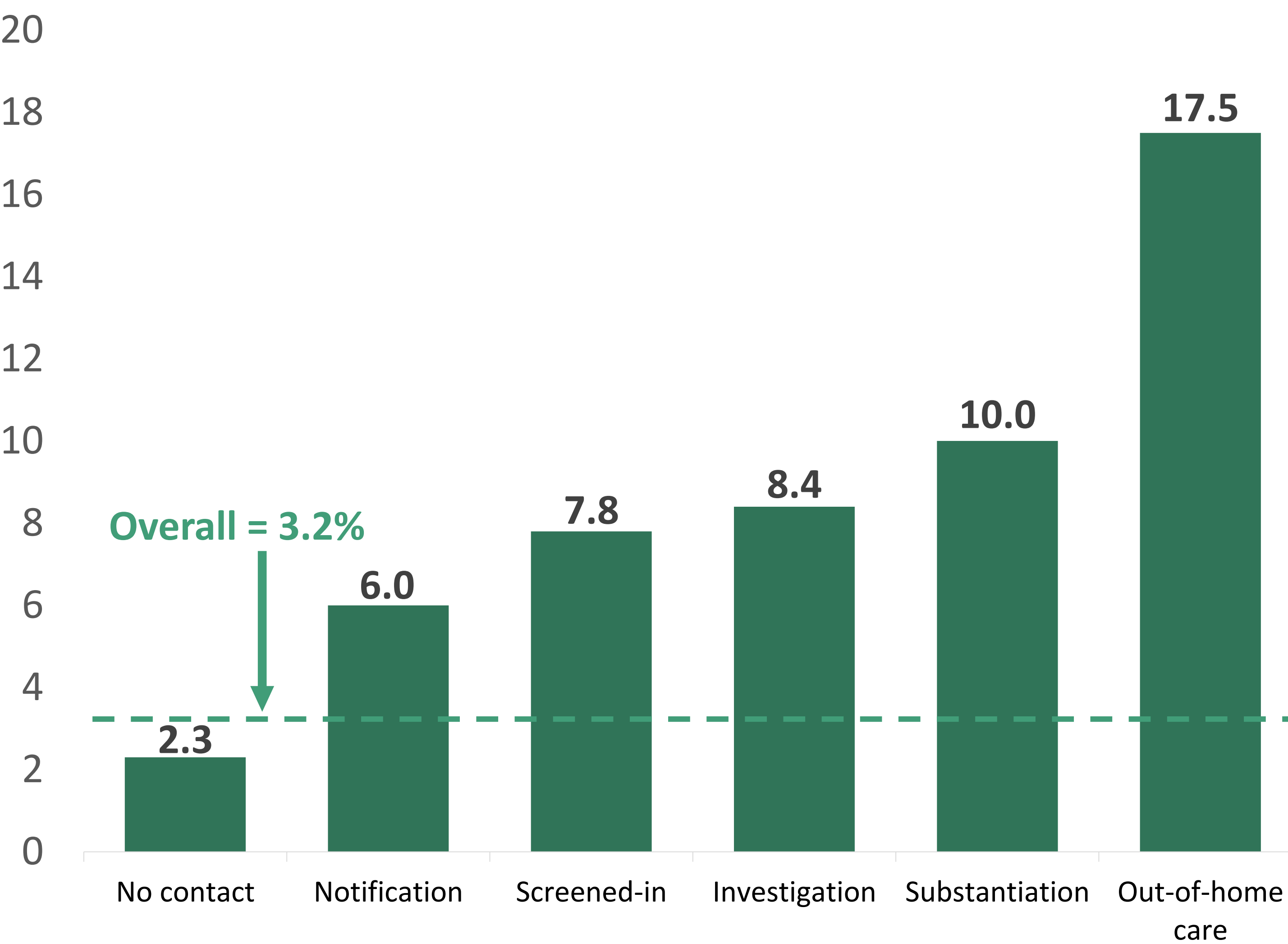
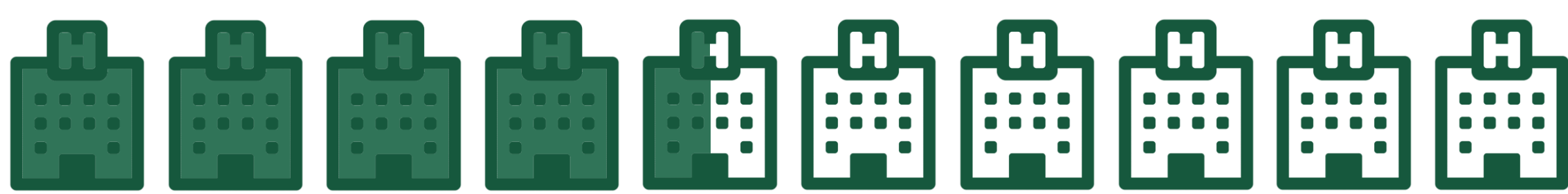


Figure 1: Proportion of individuals born in South Australia 1991-1999 (n=175,115) with at least one mental health-related hospitalisation at age 12-17 years, by highest level of DCP contact between ages 0-11.

Children with prior contact with the Department for Child Protection made up 40% of adolescents with a mental health-related hospitalisation...



...and accounted for 45% of all adolescent mental health-related hospitalisations.



Take away messages

- Although young people with a CP history made up 15.5% of the study population, they accounted for 40% of 12-17-year-olds with at least one mental health-related hospitalisation and 45% of all mental health-related hospitalisations for 12-17-year-olds.
- Potential trauma sequelae associated with child protection history is important to consider in the response to adolescents hospitalised due to mental health challenges.