

A Letter from the Editors

Welcome to the Fifth Edition of the Journal of Undergraduate Research in Alberta. This Edition of JURA showcases some exceptional undergraduate research covering a diverse range of topics. We are pleased to introduce the first Feature Article in this edition of JURA, demonstrating direct relevance of undergraduate research at the University of Calgary to residents of Alberta. Child welfare practices in Alberta are addressed in this three-part feature article which is summarized below.

Prior to 1998, there were relatively little child welfare data to support the shifts and innovations in child welfare policy, legislation and practice in Canada. Rather, policy and practice decisions were based upon established value positions related to the best interests of the child, or in response to tragic events or child fatalities. The Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (CIS-1998) provided the initial opportunity to examine contextual factors associated with child welfare decision making. Jurisdictional variation in policy and practice supported the development of provincial and territorial studies that ran concurrently with each national CIS cycle. The Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (AIS-2008) produced a provincial estimate of 27,147 child investigations which serves as a solid foundation on which to understand the context and outcomes of child investigations in this province. Secondary data analyses of the AIS-2008 provide an opportunity to explore child, parental, household and case factors associated with child maltreatment investigations as well as outcomes related to placement, child welfare court, ongoing services and case substantiation. This special issue highlights secondary analyses of the AIS-2008 on three child welfare research and practice topics. These specific analyses examine the risk and protective factors associated with differential forms of front-end investigation; the increase of younger children at risk (0-5 years of age); and the continuing emergence of intimate partner violence as a form of maltreatment. Findings from the AIS-2008 analyses inform policy and practice for Alberta Human Services.

-Adrian Yee

We would like to thank all of the authors, reviewers and Editorial Board Members who made publication of the fifth edition of JURA possible. Lastly, we would like to acknowledge Dr. Walter Herzog who has continued to provide mentorship and financial support to JURA as well as Dr. Mike Kallos, who has taken an active role in the expansion of JURA on the University of Calgary Campus.

JURA is always looking for authors, reviewers, advocates and anyone who may be interested in joining the Editorial Team! We hope that you enjoy the fifth Edition.

Sincerely,

Krysta Powers & Kelsey Collins
Journal of Undergraduate Research in Alberta Editors