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Abstract for stream 13: "**Family Policies and the Reconciling of Paid Work and Care**
Changing family life and challenges to social policy"

A social and economic profile of mothers with children taken into custody

Mounting inequalities among families with children in Finland are demonstrated by the fact that increasing numbers of children are taken into custody. Internationally there is a broad literature on the risks of child custody placements and outcomes of these placements. In contrast, very little is known about outcomes for parents. It is not clear if child's placement into custody is more likely to help the mother to regain control over her life or to aggravate mother's social and economic problems. This is relevant not only for parents themselves but also for children placed outside their homes, as many children maintain contact with their biological parents or return to live with them. In this article, we analyse social and economic profiles (social assistance receipt, unemployment and morbidity) of mothers whose children have been taken into custody. This is a retrospective cohort study of mothers with children (0–8 yrs.) taken into custody between 1997 and 2004. In accordance with our register-based study design, we merged the Finnish child welfare register with several administrative social insurance registers. We are able to follow mother's social and economic profiles for up to three years after their child's placement into custody. We construct a comparison group of mothers with similar socio-economic background as a comparison group. Based on the results, we discuss the family policy and general welfare policy implications of offering support to mothers whose children have been taken into custody.

Authors:

Miia Saarikallio, The Social Insurance Institution, Research Department, PO Box 450, 00101 Helsinki, Finland, tel. +358 20 634 1968, miia.saarikallio@kela.fi

Heikki Hiilamo, The Social Insurance Institution, Research Department, PO Box 450, 00101 Helsinki, Finland, tel. + 358 20 634 1889, heikki.hiilamo@kela.fi