Does mental health screening and assessment in child welfare improve mental health service receipt, child safety, and permanence for children in out-of-home care? An evaluation of the Gateway CALL demonstration

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This research aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Gateway CALL intervention, which implemented mental health screening, diagnostic assessment, and referral to treatment practices for children in out-of-home care. The study involved 538 children (birth to 18 years) over a 17-month period.

Key Findings:

- **Mental Health Services**: Children in the Gateway CALL group had a greater number of mental health service visits compared to the comparison group, though the likelihood of receiving services did not differ significantly.
- **Child Safety**: There was a higher number of screened-in calls after the intervention in the Gateway CALL group, indicating increased reporting or identification of safety concerns. However, no differences were observed in substantiations of maltreatment.
- **Permanency Outcomes**: No significant effects were found on permanency outcomes, such as reunification or adoption rates.

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