A National Study of the Impact of Outpatient Mental Health Services for Children in Long Term Foster Care

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This study examines whether outpatient mental health services improve behavioral health outcomes for children in long-term foster care, a group with high mental health needs and high service use. Using data from 439 children in the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW), researchers estimate the effect of receiving outpatient mental health services on internalizing and externalizing behavior problems. The findings show that these services did **not** lead to measurable improvements in children's behavioral health. The study situates these results within existing literature pointing to concerns about the quality and effectiveness of mental health services provided to children in foster care.

This is evidence that adoption competent mental health services are needed.

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