
Out of home care: An overview of its use within Queensland

Cassandra Rayment
PhD Candidate
School of Justice Studies, Faculty of Law
Queensland University of Technology

Today's Presentation

An overview of children in Queensland who have been placed in alternative care as a result of a child protection notification.

History of Child Protection in QLD

Department of Welfare Services 1985-1987

Department of Children's Services 1985-1987

Department of Family and Youth Services 1987-1988

Department of Family Services 1988-1990

Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and
Islander Affairs 1990-1996

Department of Families, Youth and Community Care
1996-2000

Department of Families 2000-2003

Child Protection Act 1999 (s.9)

- (1) “Harm”, to a child, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child’s physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing.
- (2) It is immaterial how the harm is caused.
- (3) Harm can be caused by—
 - (a) physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or
 - (b) sexual abuse or exploitation.

Child Protection Act 1999 (s.10)

Therefore a child in need of protection, is a child who,

- (a) has suffered harm, is suffering harm, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering harm; and
- (b) does not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from the harm.

Current Research Variables

- Client number
- Date of birth
- Sex
- Indigenous status
- Ethnicity
- Language
- Suburb
- Received date of the notification
- Primary source
- Notification category
- Notification outcome
- Type of harm notified
- Age at notification date
- Assessment outcome
- Type of harm substantiated
- Relationship of the child to the abuser
- Age at order date
- Order type
- Order start date
- Placement type
- Proposed discharge date
- Actual discharge date
- Discharge reason

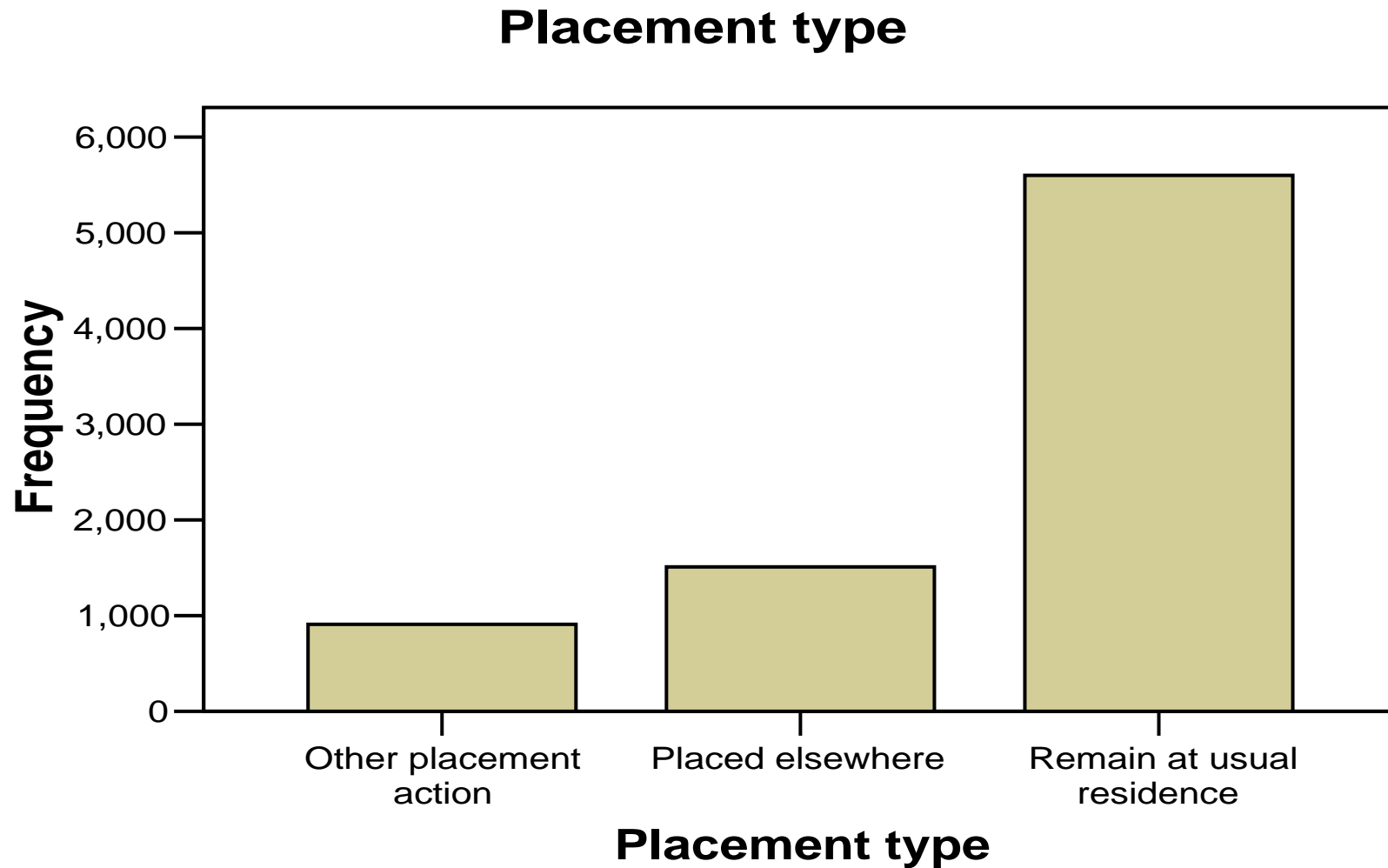
Overall Cohort Statistics

- Between 1985 – 2003, 12 795 child protection notifications, concerning 5 658 children (average 2.26 contacts with the Department).
- Highest number = 24
- Lowest Number = 1

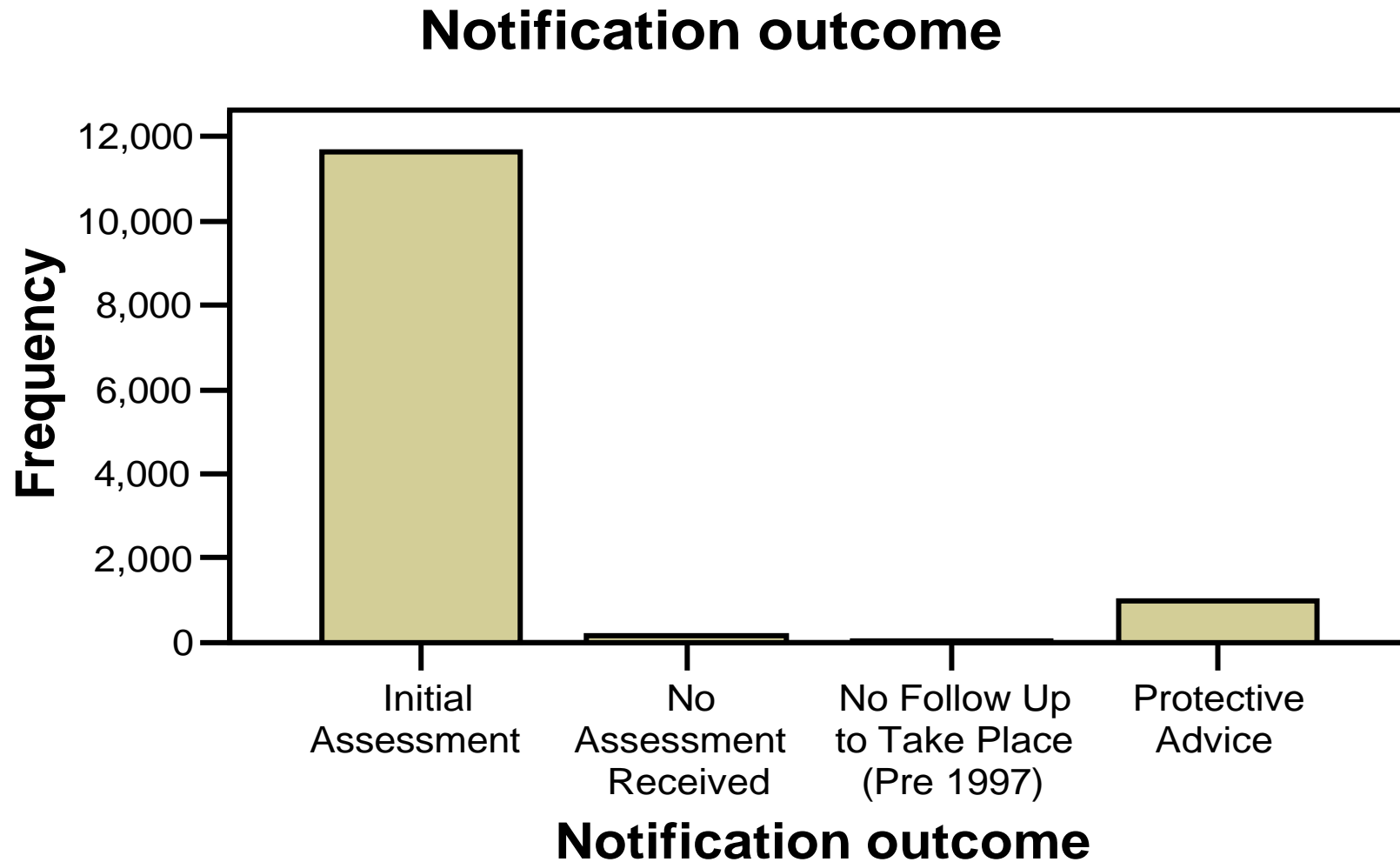
Overall Cohort Statistics

- 18.8% placed in alternative care
 - 1 502 placements concerning 1 068 children
 - Highest = 6
 - Lowest = 1
-
- 69.9% remained in usual residence
 - 5 600 placements concerning 3 367 children
 - Highest = 14
 - Lowest = 1

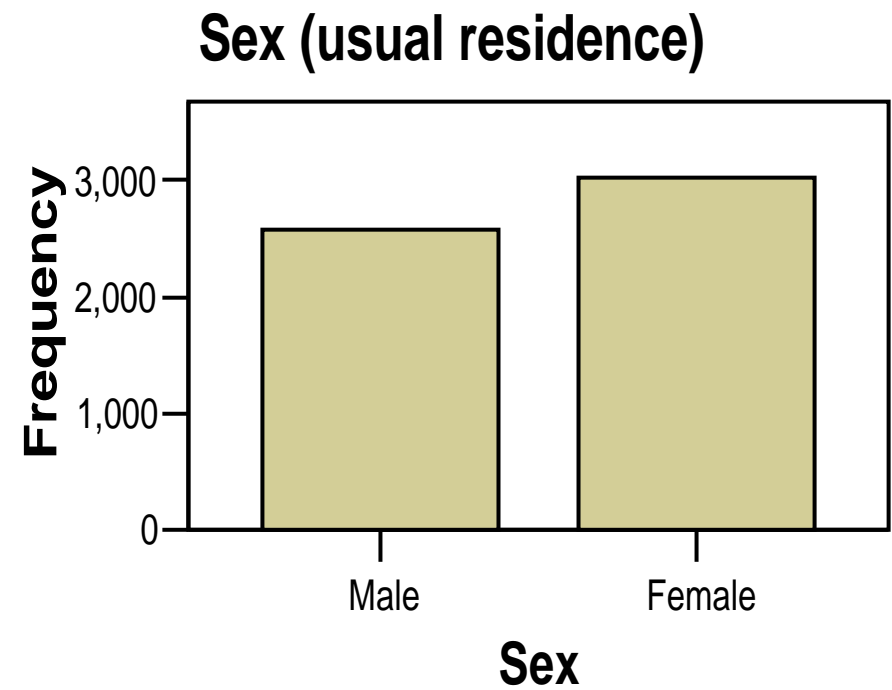
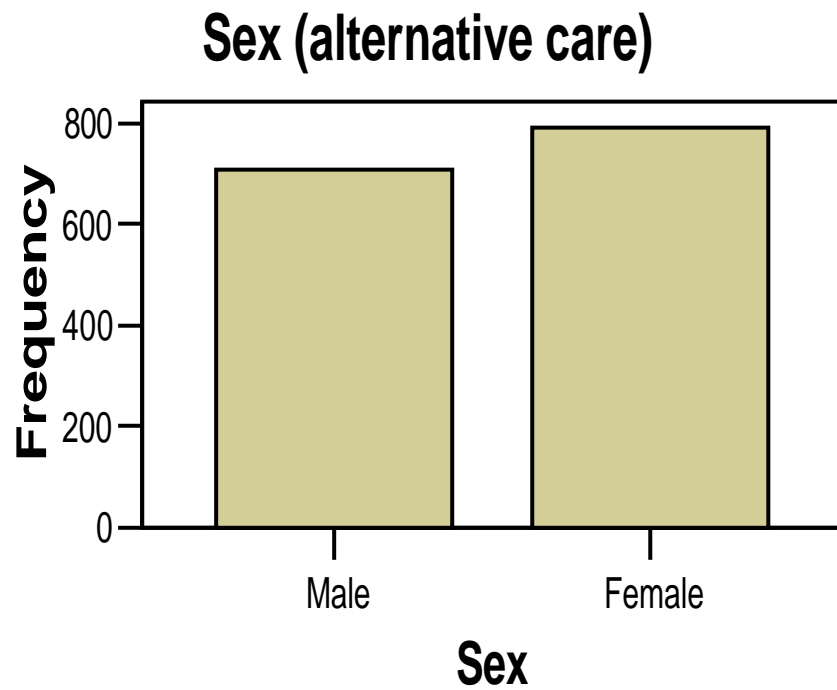
Placement Type



Notification Outcome

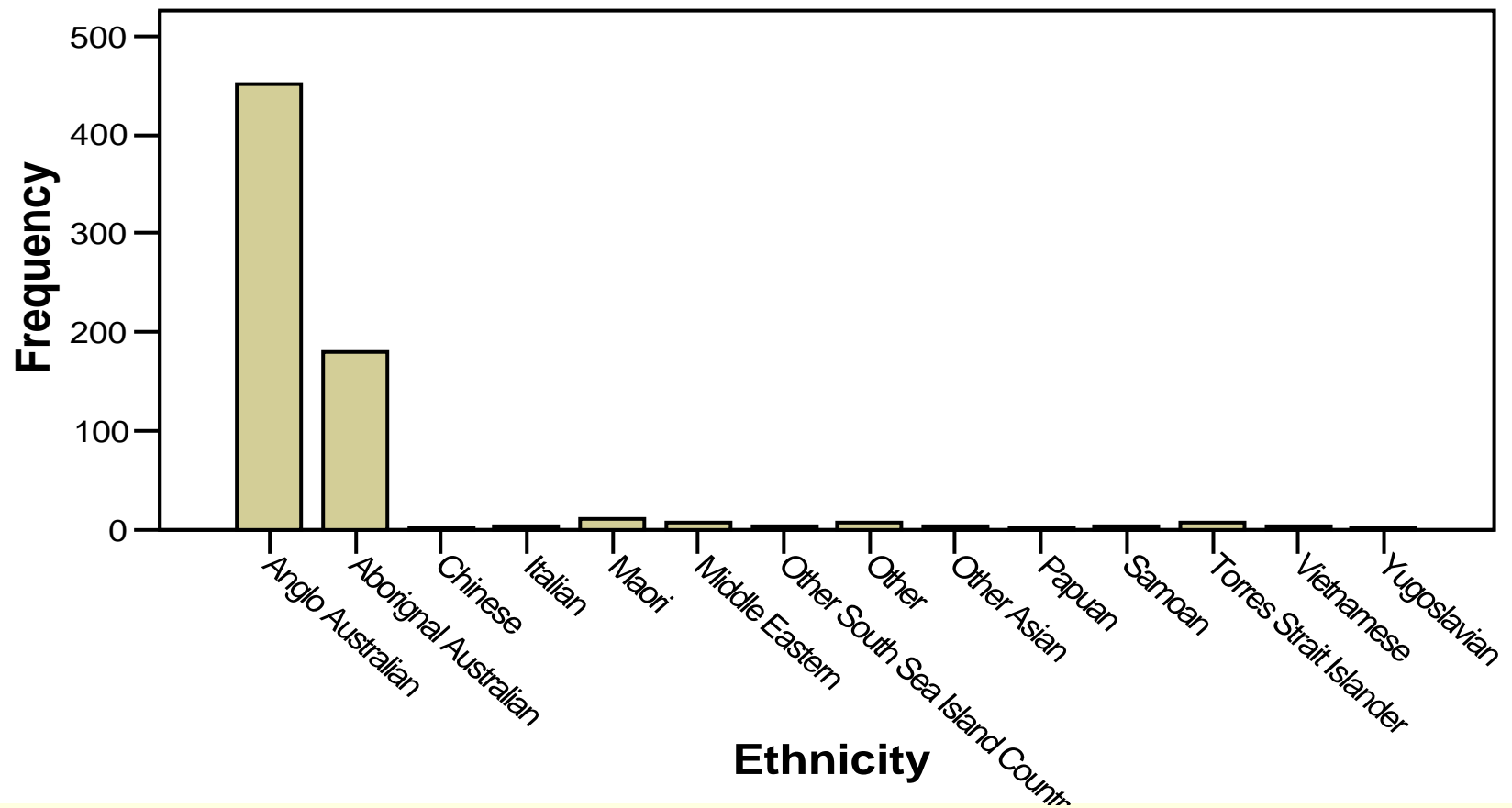


Sex



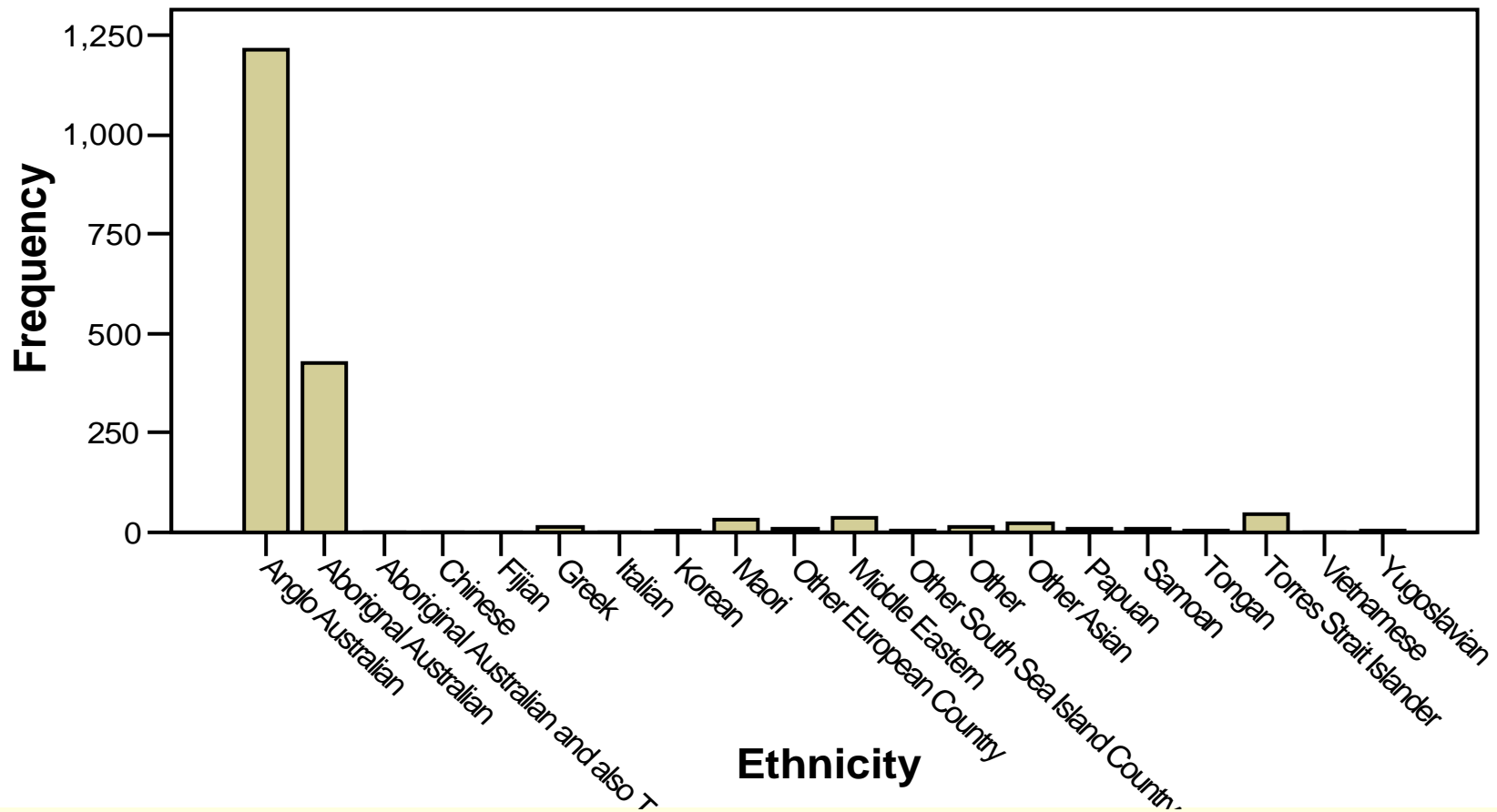
Ethnicity

Ethnicity (alternative care)



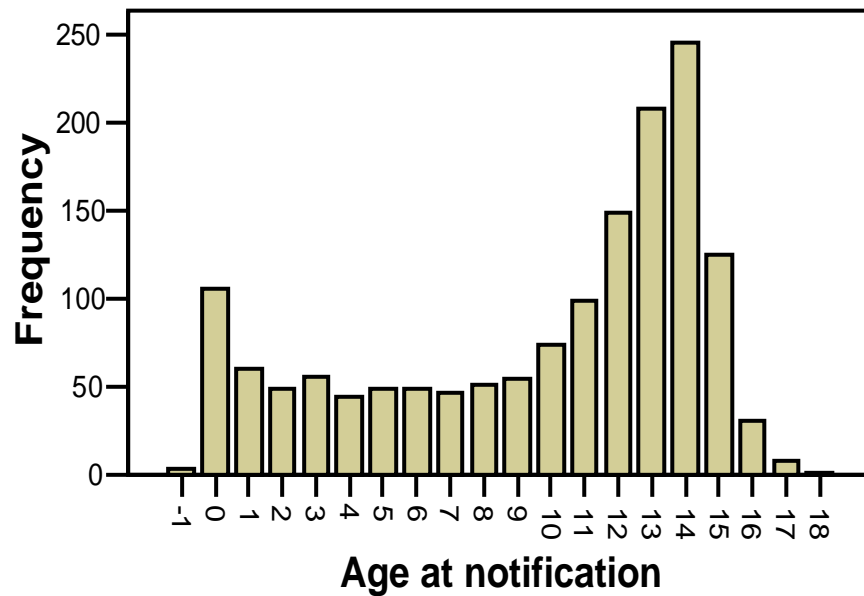
Ethnicity

Ethnicity (usual residence)

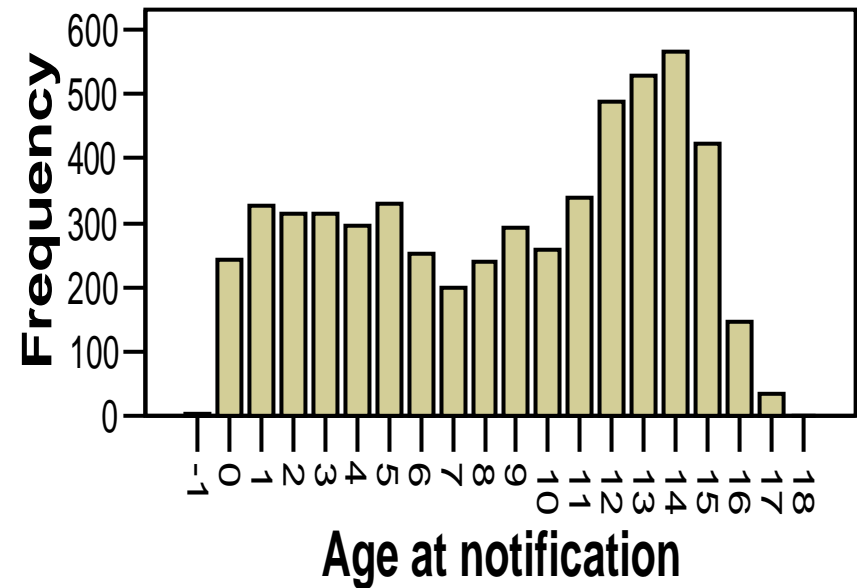


Age at Notification

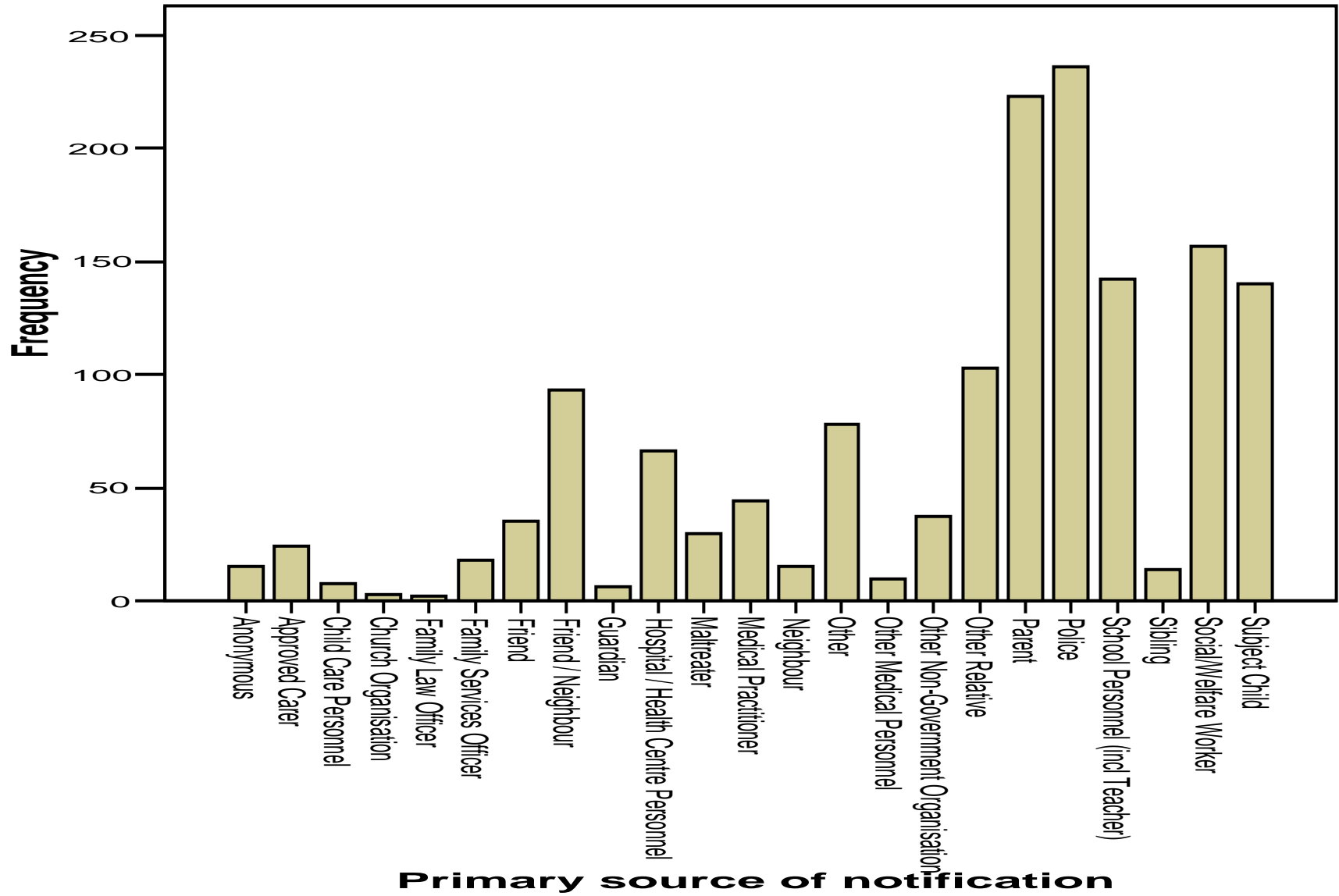
Age at notification (alternative care)



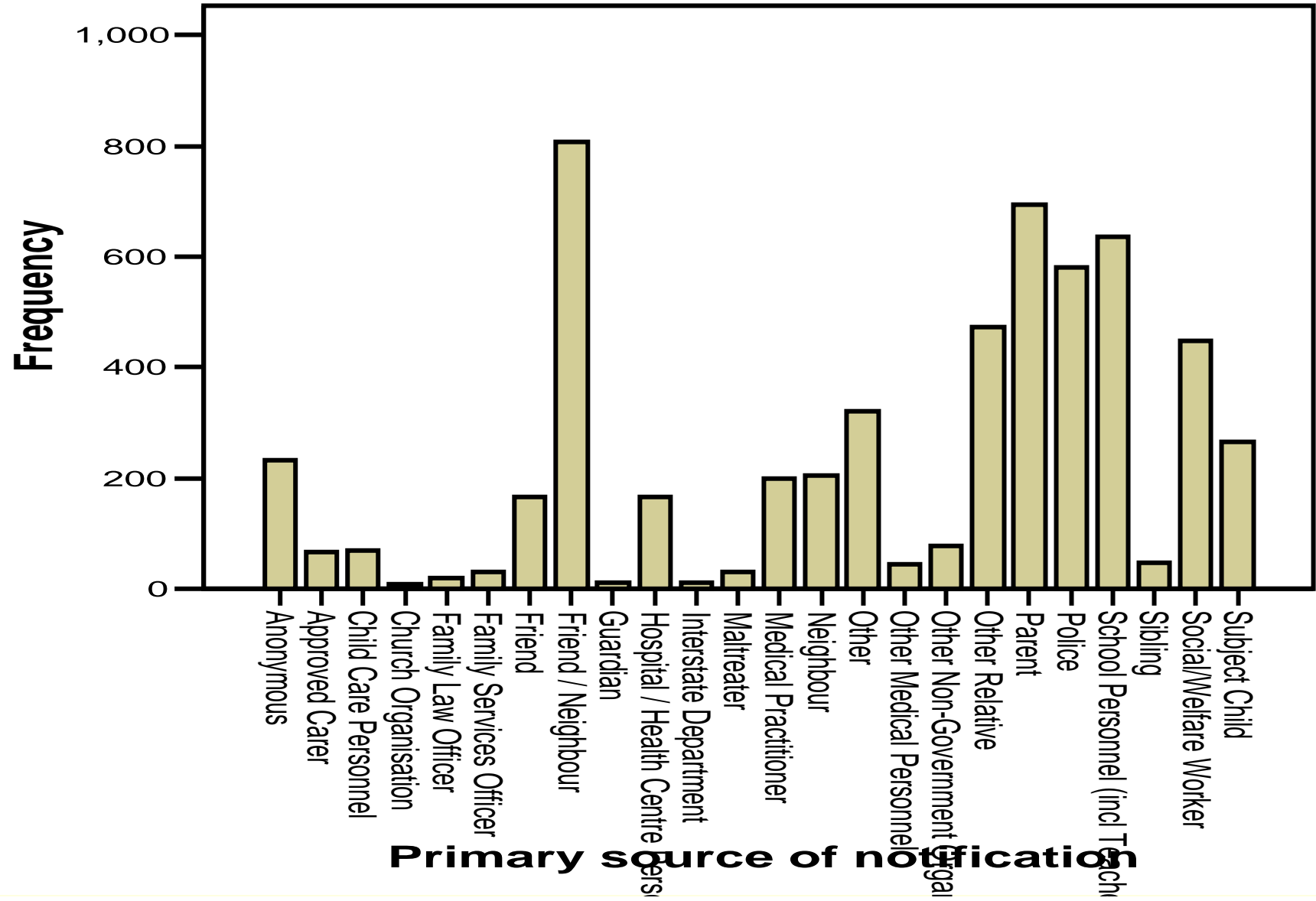
Age at notification (usual residences)



Primary source of notification (alternative care)

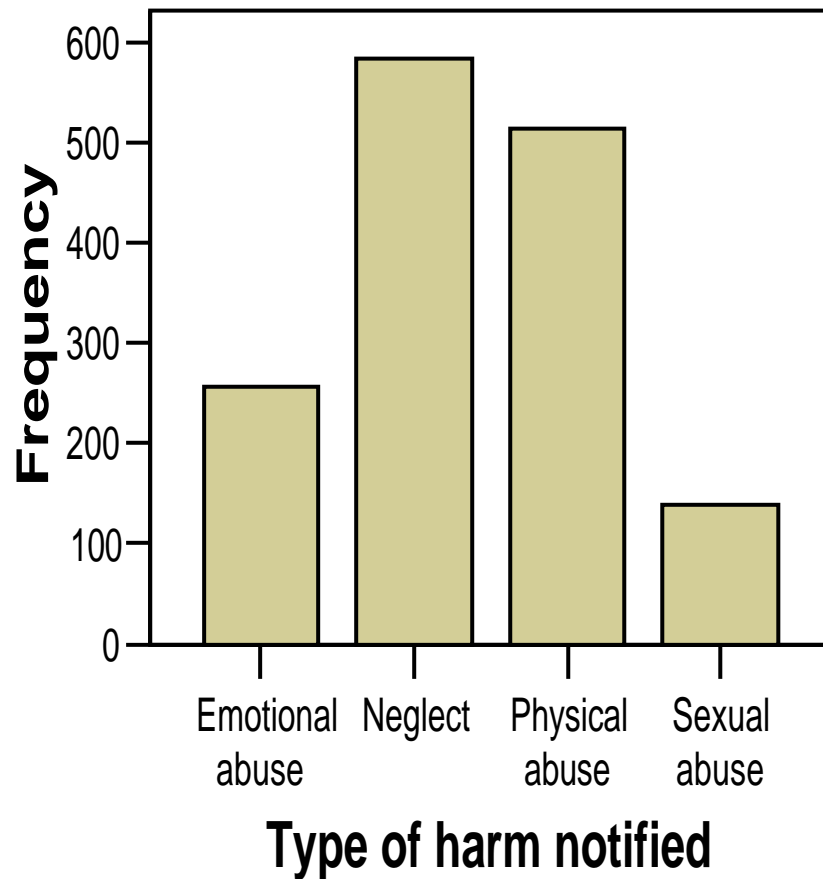


Primary source of notification (usual residence)

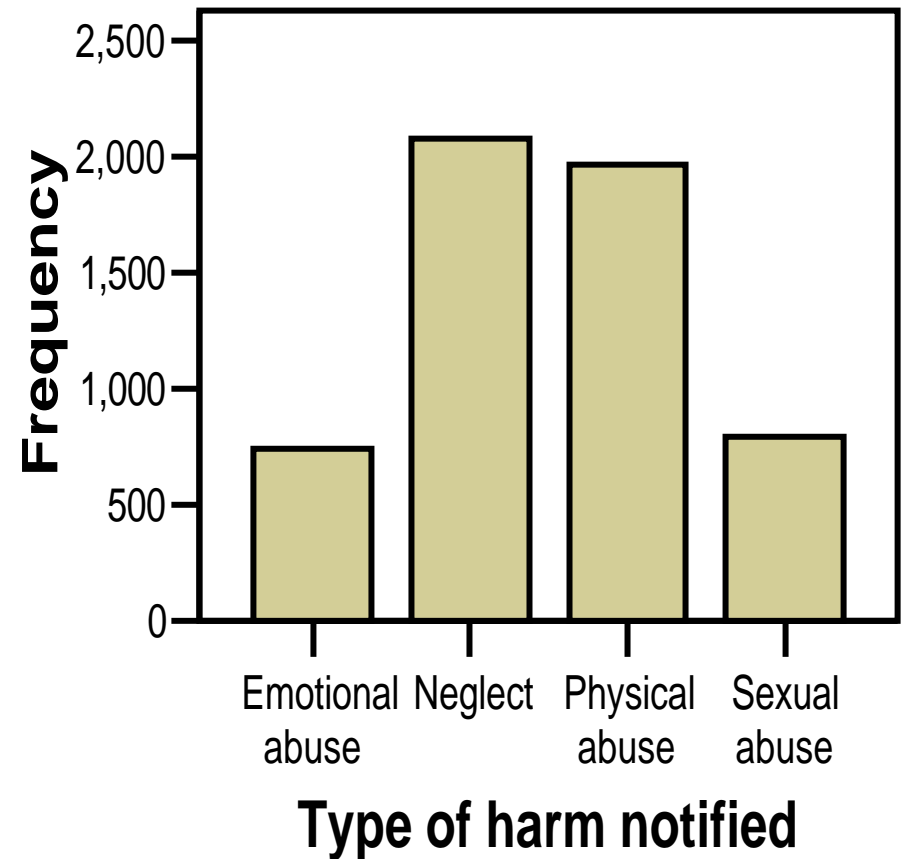


Type of Harm Notified

Type of harm notified (alternative care)

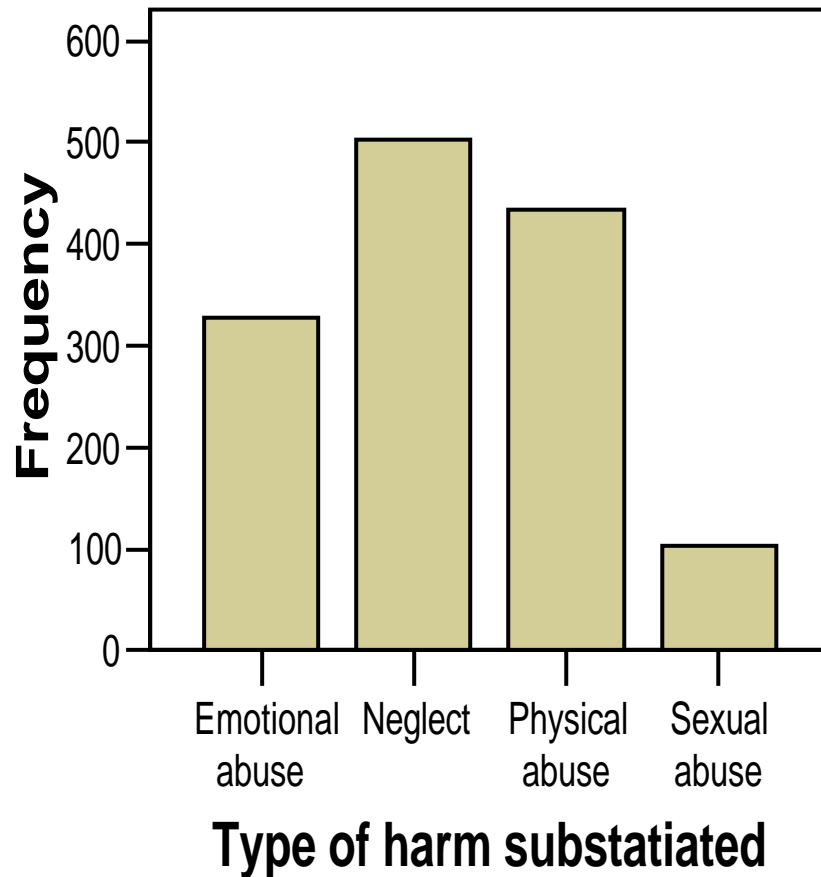


Type of harm notified (usual residence)

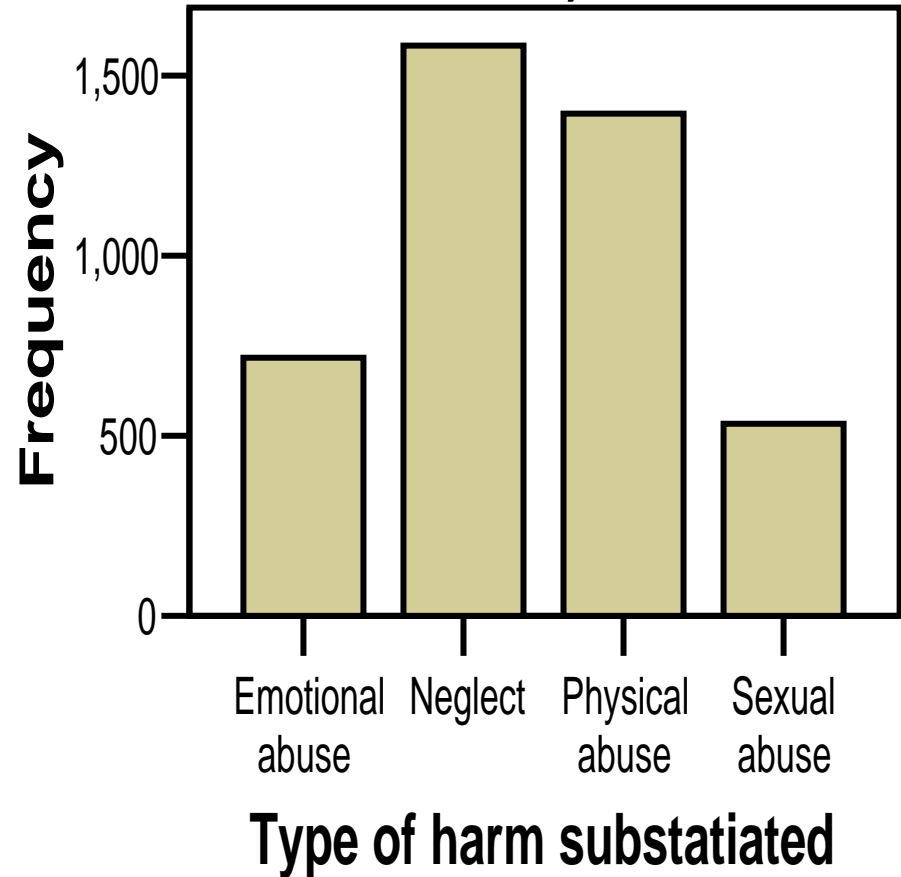


Type of Harm Substantiated

Type of harm substantiated
(alternative care)

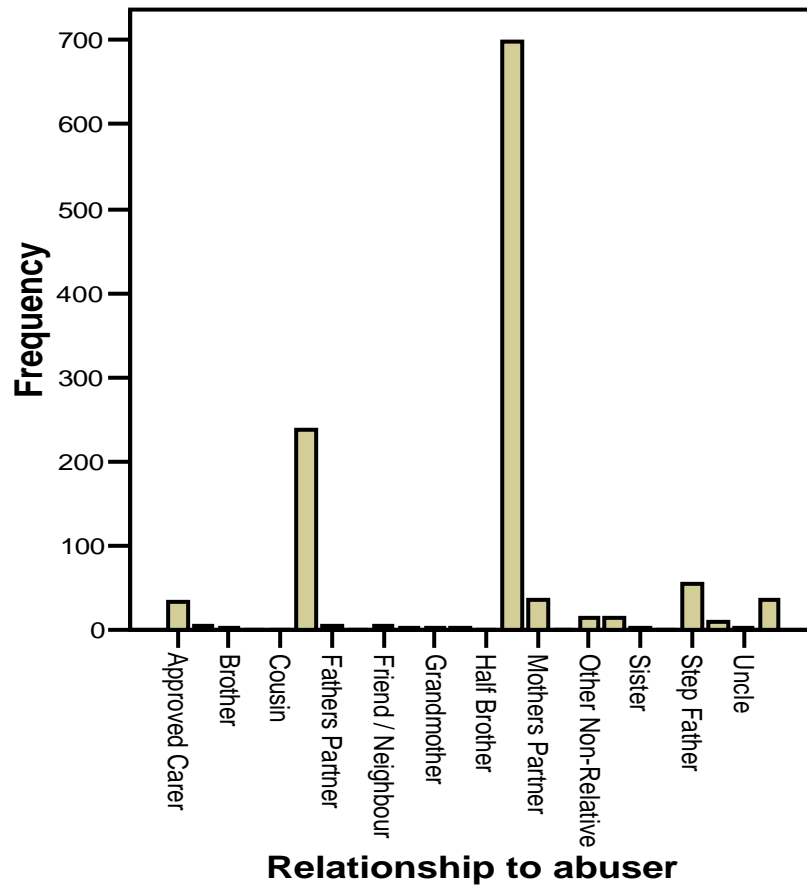


Type of harm substantiated (usual residence)

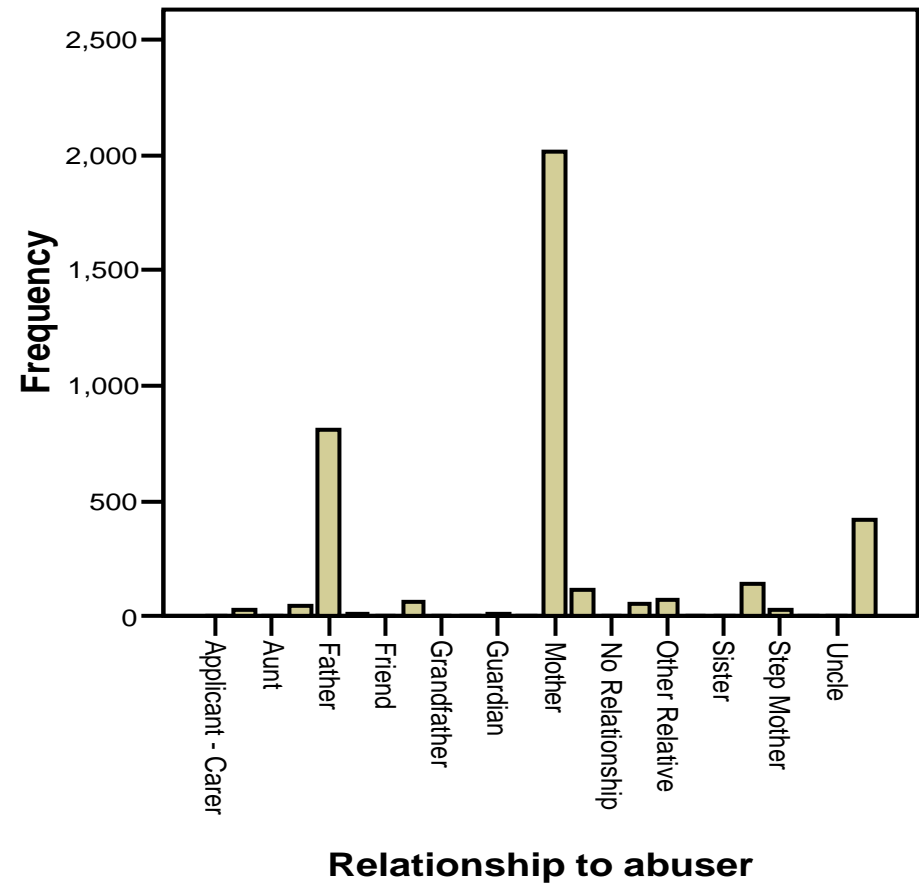


Relationship to Abuser

Relationship to abuser (alternative care)

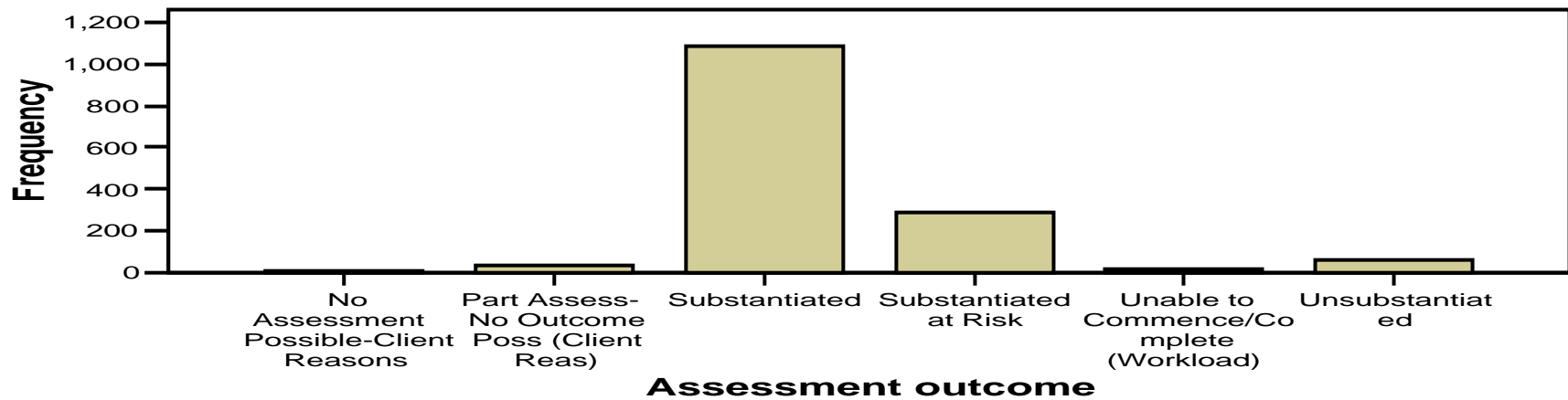


Relationship to abuser (usual residence)

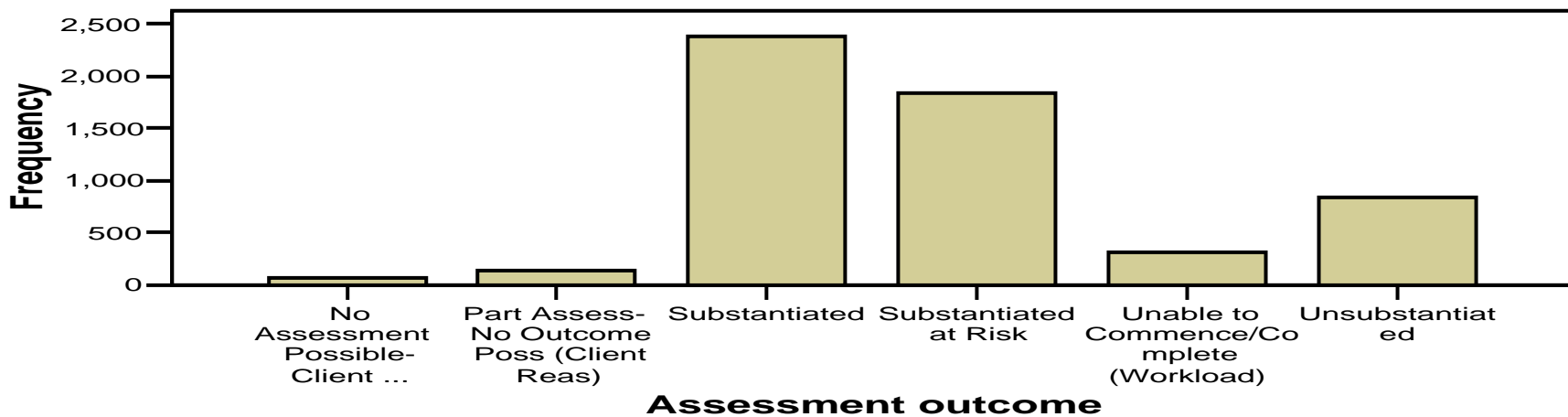


Assessment Outcome

Assessment outcome (alternative care)



Assessment outcome (usual residence)



Geographical Location

Alternative Care		Usual Residences	
Bundaberg	34	Toowoomba	75
Toowoomba	32	Mount Isa	73
Woodridge	28	Rockhampton	63
Cairns	20	Woodridge	61
Mount Isa	19	Bundaberg	60
Mackay	14	Inala	56
Goodna	13	Kingston	55
Gladstone	13	Eagleby	52
Bowen	13	Goodna	43
West End	13	Gympie	41
Kingston	12	Mackay	41
Inala	12	Marsden	34
Kelso	12	Capalaba	33
Maryborough	12	Gladstone	31
Kallangur	10	Kirwan	31
Nambour	10	Caboolture	30
Southport	10	Cloncurry	30

Interpreting the Data

Demographically those who received alternative care placements do not appear to be dramatically different from those who remained in their usual residences.

Further research?

- What further criteria are utilised to determine whether to place a child in alternative care as opposed to leaving them reside in their usual residence?
- How is neglect defined and established?
- This will be achieved by a qualitative research component, comprising of interviews with staff at the Department of Families/ those working in the field.