

## INTRODUCTION

- Child welfare decisions following child maltreatment incidents, such as removing a child from the home, can have a significant impact on the safety and well-being of children and families
- Despite the importance of these decisions, little is known about protective actions taken to promote child safety in maltreatment incidents involving different types of neglect
- Prior studies have predominantly examined a broadly defined category of neglect despite growing empirical evidence that child neglect is a heterogeneous phenomenon characterized by distinct types of neglectful caregiving
- Greater understanding of child welfare decisions in incidents involving different neglect types can inform child neglect interventions that effectively promote child safety

### Objective

- To examine differences in child protective actions in substantiated incidents of child neglect characterized by five neglect types

## METHOD

### Sample

- Case records of 390 substantiated neglect incidents involving children of U.S. Army service members

### Procedure

- **Neglect types** (physical, supervisory, emotional, moral-legal, educational) were classified using the Modified Maltreatment Classification System<sup>1</sup>
- **Child protective actions** (*child removal from home, parent offender removal from home, other child victim and parent offender interventions, civilian and military law enforcement investigations*) were drawn from case records

### Statistical Analysis

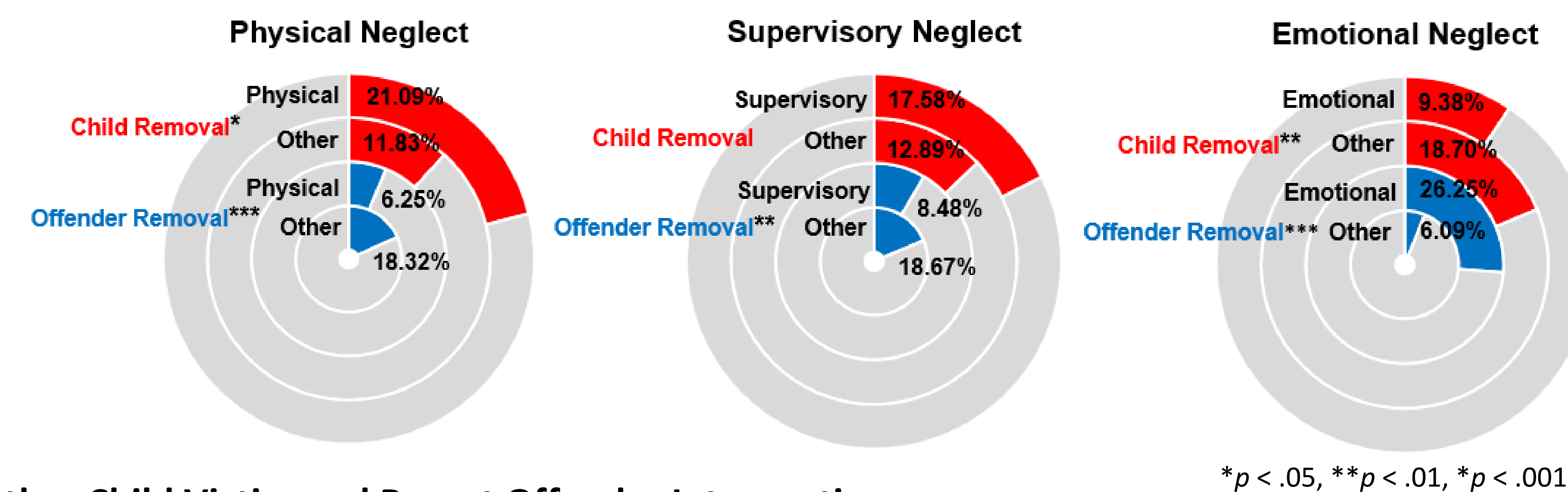
- Chi-square tests were used to examine differences in the frequencies of protective actions for each neglect type compared to incidents that did not involve that type (“other”)
- Significant results are displayed in Figures 1-3

## RESULTS

### Child and Parent Offender Removal From the Home

- Children were removed from the home more frequently in physical neglect incidents ( $\chi^2=5.86, p < .05$ ) and less frequently in emotional neglect incidents ( $\chi^2=6.48, p < .01$ , Figure 1).
- In contrast, parent offenders were removed from the home more frequently in emotional neglect incidents ( $\chi^2=31.20, p < .001$ ) and less frequently in physical neglect ( $\chi^2=10.19, p < .001$ ) and supervisory neglect ( $\chi^2=8.03, p < .01$ ) incidents (Figure 1). 86% of emotional neglect incidents involved children’s exposure to domestic violence.

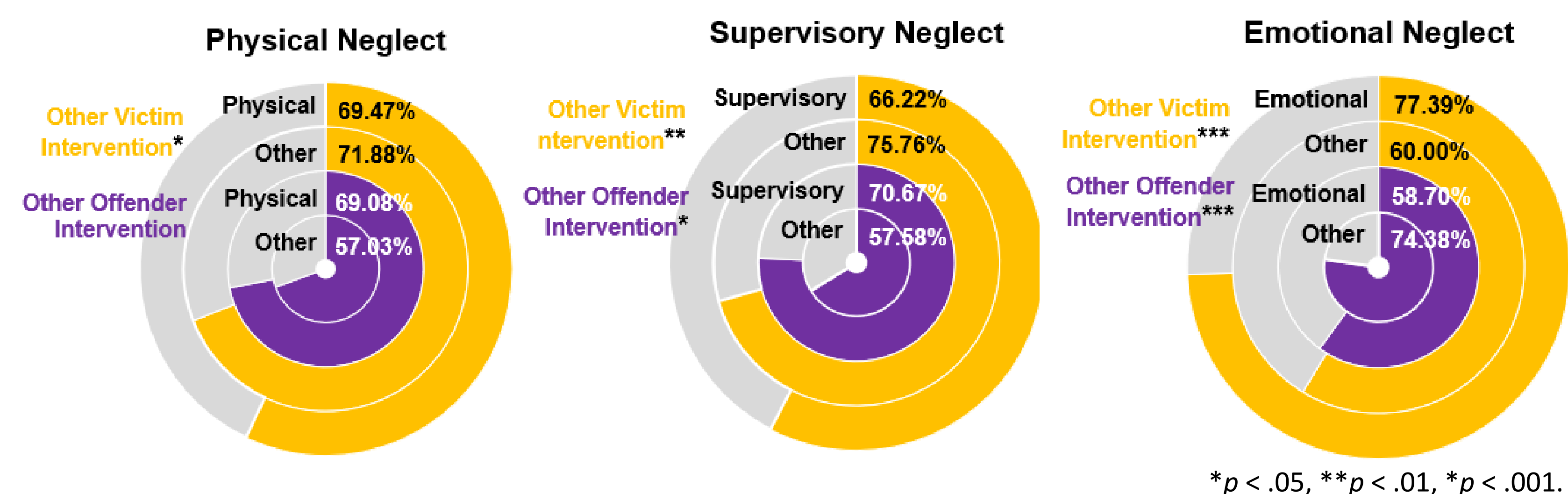
Figure 1. Percentages of Incidents Resulting in Child and Offender Removal from the Home by Neglect Types



### Other Child Victim and Parent Offender Interventions

- Child victim interventions other than home removal (e.g., mental health treatment, respite care services) occurred more frequently following emotional neglect ( $\chi^2=10.21, p < .001$ ) and less frequently following physical and supervisory neglect ( $\chi^2s \geq 5.50, ps \leq .05$ , Figure 2).
- Other parent offender interventions (e.g., substance abuse treatment services, parenting skills training) occurred more frequently following supervisory neglect ( $\chi^2=4.14, p < .05$ ) and less frequently following emotional neglect ( $\chi^2=13.66, p < .001$ , Figure 2).

Figure 2. Percentages of Incidents Resulting in Other Child Victim and Offender Interventions by Neglect Types

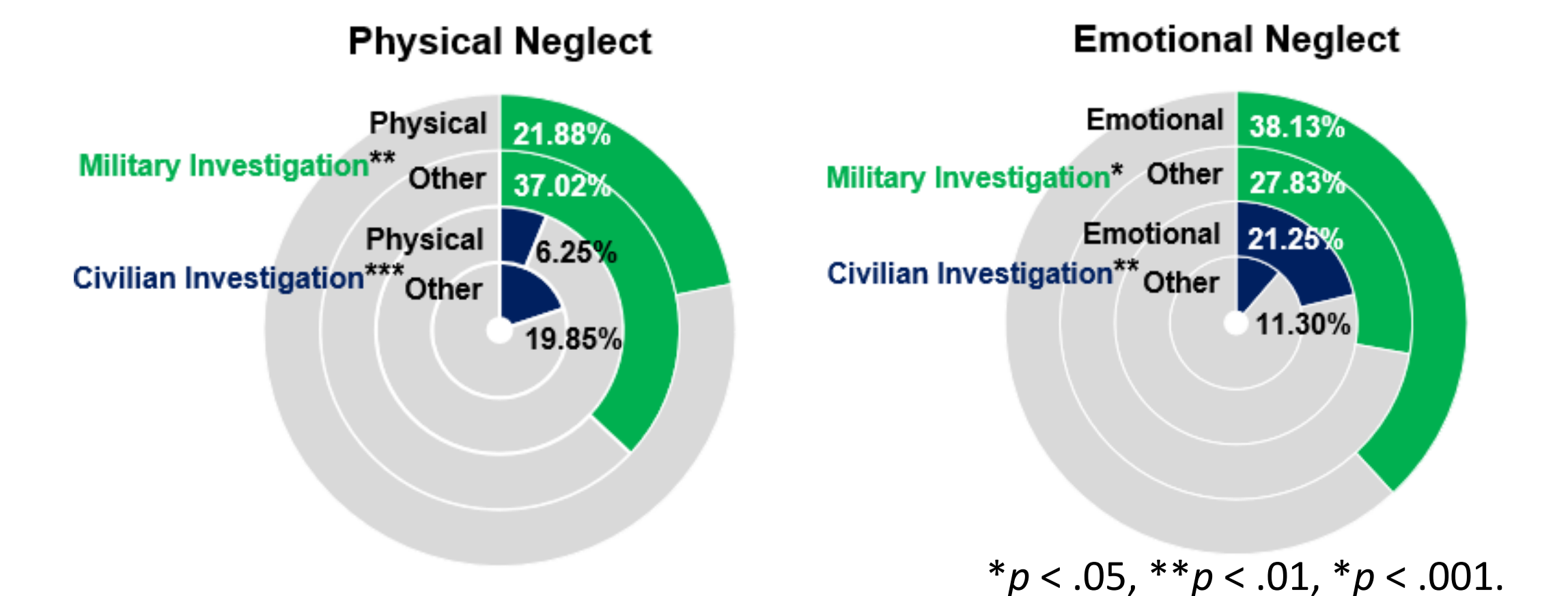


## RESULTS (CONTINUED)

### Civilian and Military Law Enforcement Investigations

- Both civilian and military law enforcement investigations occurred more frequently in emotional neglect incidents ( $\chi^2s \geq 4.60, ps \leq .05$ ) and less frequently in physical neglect incidents ( $\chi^2s \geq 9.06, ps \leq .01$ , Figure 3).

Figure 3. Percentages of Incidents Involving Civilian and Military Law Enforcement Investigations by Neglect Types



## CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS

- Findings suggest different protective actions may be required to ensure the safety of children following particular types of neglect
- Neglect types should be differentiated in administrative databases related to maltreated children to facilitate research on factors that influence child welfare decisions in incidents involving different neglect types
- Longitudinal research on long-term outcomes associated with child and parent offender removal is needed to determine whether these protective actions effectively protect children from subsequent maltreatment without undermining child well-being

## REFERENCES

1. Barnett D, Manly JT, Cicchetti D. Defining child maltreatment: The interface between policy and research. In Cicchetti D, Toth SL, eds. *Child Abuse, Child Development, and Social Policy*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex; 1993:11-17.

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