

**Vulnerability and Risk Factors for  
Sexual, Physical, and Emotional Violence  
Against Children with Disabilities in Uganda:  
Baseline Results from A Cluster Trial**

**Aya Fujita, Jamie Lachman,  
Frances Gardner, Carolyn Namutebi,  
Betty Okot, Joseph Kahwa,  
Julie Riddell, Danny Wight,  
Richard Sekiwunga, Francisco Calderon,  
Godfrey Siu**

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University  
of Glasgow



Global  
Parenting  
Initiative

# Background

# Background: Children with disabilities

## Child maltreatment

- Prevalence: 240 million children with disabilities, 80% in LMICs (UNICEF, 2021)
- Poorer outcomes across various domains compared to peers without disabilities
- Higher risk of violence than those without disabilities (OR=2.08, Fang et al., 2022)
- Increased vulnerability to maltreatment due to certain factors, though primary causes are often similar to those without disabilities.

# Background: Uganda's situation

## Children with disabilities in Uganda

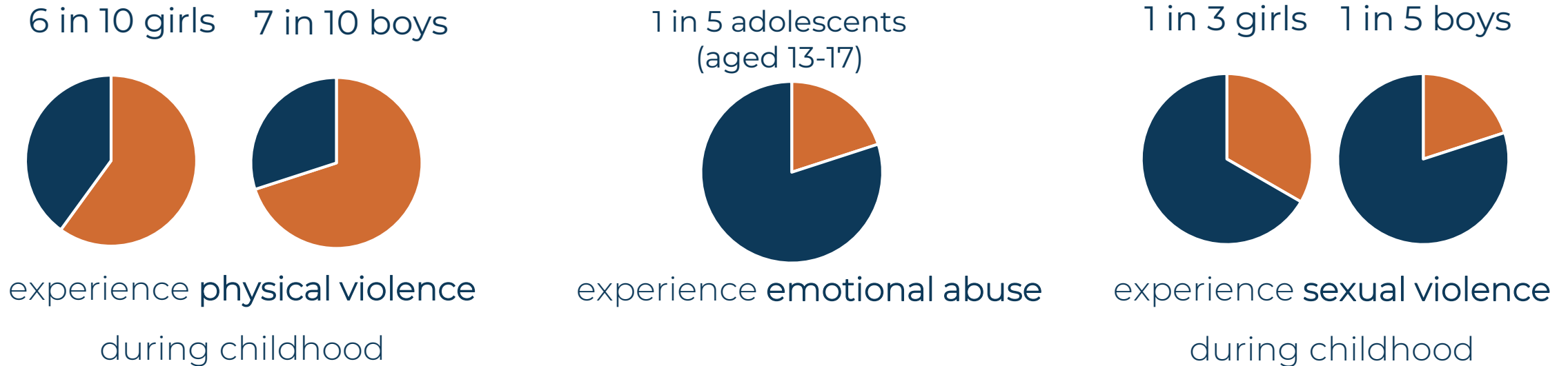
- 10.2% of child population aged 5-19 is children with disabilities (UBS, 2020)
- A study using Child Functioning Modules in one region found the following difficulties among children with disabilities (Zia et al., 2021):

Difficulties	Prevalence among children with disabilities
Depression	54%
Anxiety	50%
Remembering	12%
Learning	12%
Hearing	10%
Vision	7%



# Background: Uganda's situation

## Violence against children with and without disabilities in Uganda



There is limited literature on the maltreatment of children with disabilities in Uganda

# Study objective

## Research question

Are children with disabilities at greater risk of experiencing maltreatment and factors associated with child maltreatment compared to those without disabilities in Uganda?

This study examines:

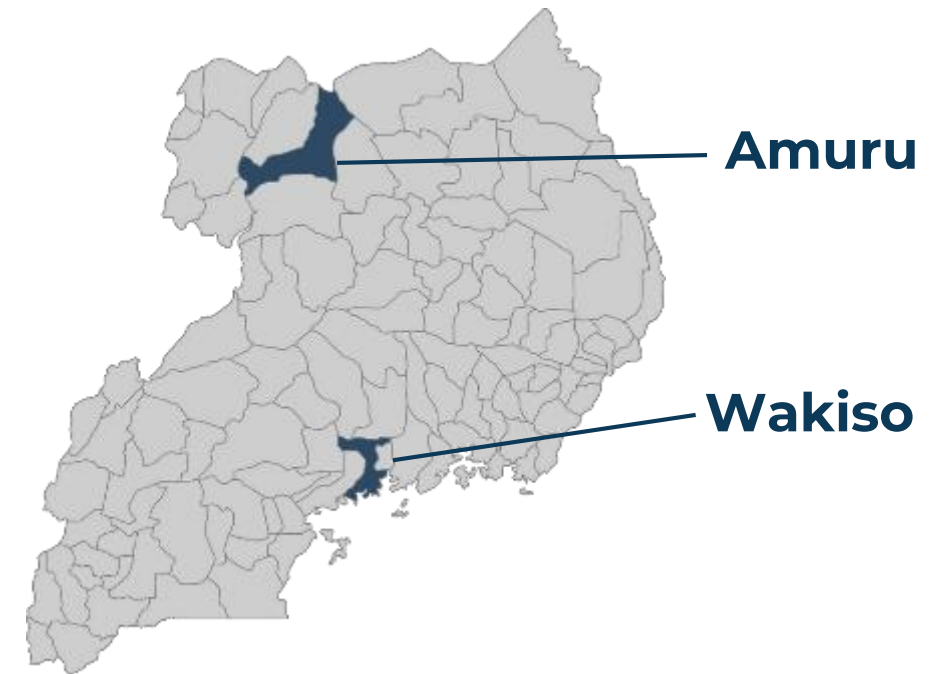
- the associations between **disability and child maltreatment**
- whether demographic and psychosocial factors influence the associations

# Methods

# Data collection

## Uganda Parenting for Respectability Implementation Science Study (UPRISE)

- Cluster randomised trial conducted in 2021
- Intervention: Parenting for Respectability
- Two districts – Wakiso (peri-urban) and Amuru (rural)
- Data collected at three time points
  - **Baseline (Fall 2021)**
  - Endline (6 months later)
  - 6-month follow-up (12 month later)

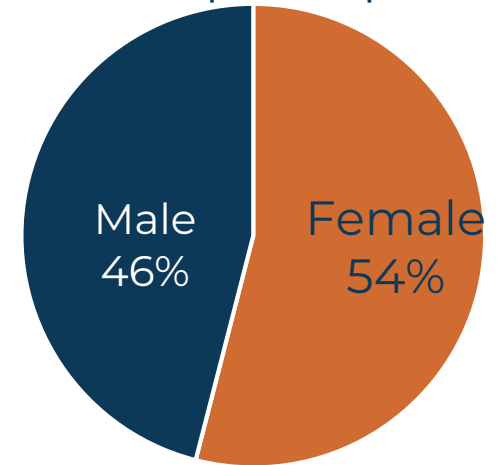




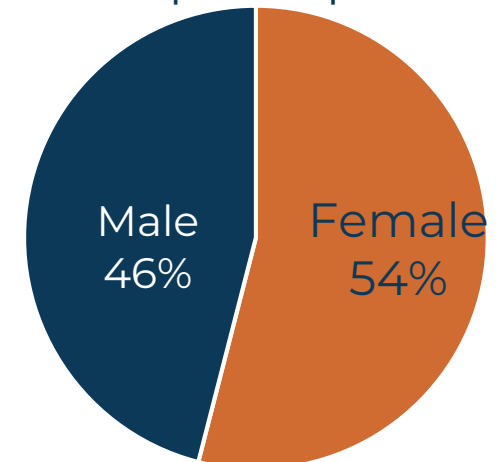
# Recruitment

- Families recruited in collaboration with SOS Children's Villages
- **2,318** parents recruited through community meetings
- **844** children ages 10-14 randomly selected for child-report
- Children with disabilities were not specifically targeted for recruitment. Parents were asked about disabilities after recruitment.

Parent participants



Child participants



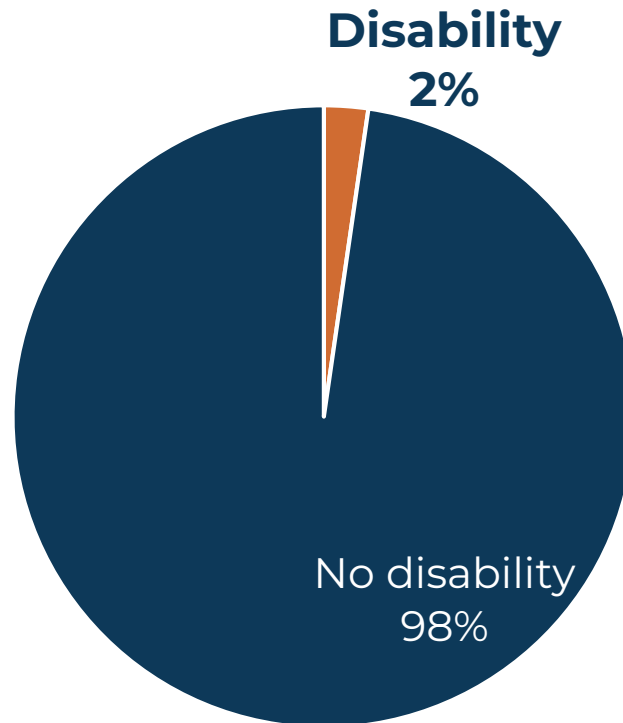
# Measures – Child disability

## Disability measures

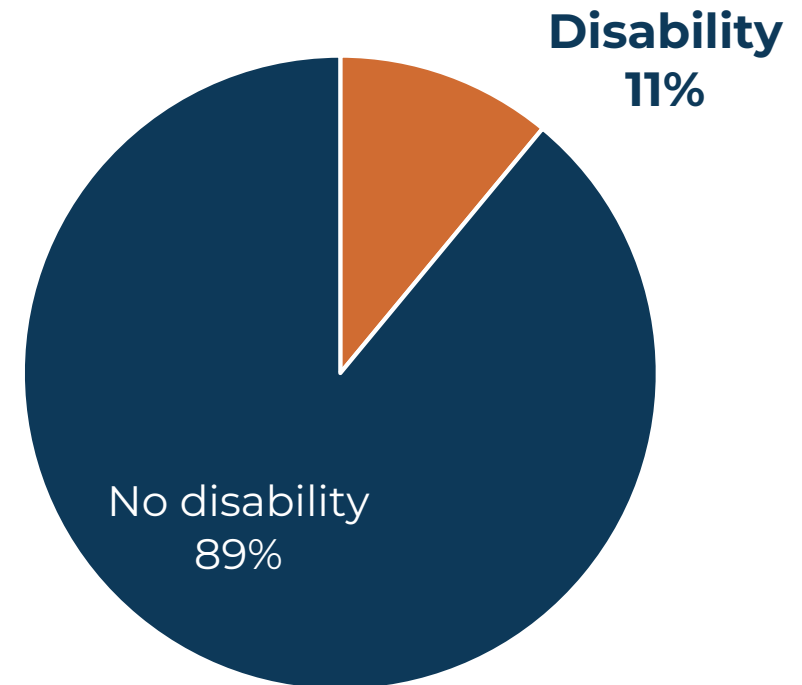
Outcome	Source
Child disability (within child sample)	Child
Presence of child with a disability in the household	Parent

# Baseline characteristics: Child

Child disability  
(child-report)



Having a child with a disability  
in the household  
(parent-report)



# Measures – Dependent variables

(i) Child maltreatment and subscales and sexual and community violence

Outcome	Source
Child maltreatment (Physical + Emotional abuse)	Parent
Child maltreatment by female parent	Child
Child maltreatment by male parent	Child
Physical abuse	Parent
Physical abuse by female parent	Child
Physical abuse by male parent	Child
Emotional abuse	Parent
Emotional abuse by female parent	Child
Emotional abuse by male parent	Child
Neglect	Parent
Sexual Violence	Child
Community sexual violence	Child
Community physical violence	Child

# Measures – Independent variables

(i) Child socio-demographic and psychosocial characteristics

Child variable	Source
Child age	Parent
Child gender	Parent
Child disability	Child
Child orphanhood	Child
Child attendance in school	Parent
Child behaviour problems	Parent
Child externalising behaviour	Parent
Child internalising behaviour	Parent
Child prosocial behaviour	Parent

# Measures – Independent variables

(ii) Parent socio-demographic and psychosocial characteristics

Outcome	Source
Parent age	Parent
Parent gender	Parent
Parent disability	Parent
Marital status	Parent
Biological parent (father, mother)	Parent
Parent stress	Parent
Parent depression	Parent

(iii) Parenting and parent-child relationship factors

Outcome	Source
Positive parenting	Parent
Parent attitudes towards corporal punishment	Parent
Parent monitoring	Parent
Parent respectable behaviour	Parent
Parent support of education	Parent
Child gender socialisation	Parent
Communication about sexual behaviour	Parent

# Measures – Independent variables

(iv) Intimate partner (IP) relationship factors

Outcome	Source
Perpetration of IPV (physical + psychological)	Parent
Victimisation of IPV (physical + psychological)	Parent
Perpetration of IP physical aggression	Parent
Victimisation of IP physical aggression	Parent
Perpetration of IP psychological aggression	Parent
Victimisation of IP psychological aggression	Parent
Perpetration of IP coercion	Parent
Victimisation of IP coercion	Parent
Perpetration of IP sexual violence	Parent
Victimisation of IP sexual violence	Parent
Partner conflict	Parent
Positive partner relationship	Parent

(v) Family characteristics and stressors

Outcome	Source
Number of infants (<aged 2) in the household	Parent
Number of children (<aged 18) in the household	Parent
Family stressors	Parent
Relative poverty	Parent
Food security	Parent

# Preliminary Results



# Baseline characteristics

Outcome	Overall sample				Family of CWD				t value	p value
	Mean	sd	min	max	Mean	sd	min	max		
Child age	12.04	1.53	8	15	12.16	1.54	10	14	-1.097	0.274
<b>Parent age</b>	<b>38.04</b>	<b>12.03</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>41.87</b>	<b>11.63</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>-4.619</b>	<b>0.000***</b>
Number of infants (<2) in household	0.45	0.59	0	5	0.40	0.60	0	3	1.174	0.241
<b>Number of children (&lt;18) in household</b>	<b>3.80</b>	<b>2.05</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>4.71</b>	<b>2.11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>-6.149</b>	<b>0.000***</b>
<b>Family stressors</b>	<b>1.44</b>	<b>1.44</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2.77</b>	<b>1.61</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>-2.661</b>	<b>0.008**</b>
Relative poverty	4.68	1.79	0	6	4.68	1.81	0	6	0.000	1.000
Food security	4.35	1.43	0	6	4.27	1.39	2	6	0.818	0.414

The average **age of parents**, **number of children in the household** and **family stressors** were significantly higher in the family of children with disabilities.

# Child maltreatment and child disability

Associations between dependent variables and child with disabilities in the household

Outcome variable	$\beta$	SE	z value	p value
Child maltreatment (Physical + Emotional abuse)	0.224	0.249	0.900	0.368
Child maltreatment by female parent	0.167	0.269	0.620	0.536
<b>Child maltreatment by male parent</b>	<b>0.583</b>	<b>0.336</b>	<b>1.734</b>	<b>0.082.</b>
Physical abuse	-0.221	0.354	-0.625	0.532
Physical abuse by female parent	0.367	0.324	1.133	0.257
Physical abuse by male parent	0.622	0.398	1.564	0.118
Emotional abuse	0.253	0.251	1.008	0.313
<b>Emotional abuse by female parent</b>	<b>0.094</b>	<b>0.0007</b>	<b>134.06</b>	<b>&lt;2e-16***</b>
<b>Emotional abuse by male parent</b>	<b>0.577</b>	<b>0.338</b>	<b>1.707</b>	<b>0.088.</b>
Neglect	-0.02	1.563	-0.013	0.990

Significant associations between child disability and child maltreatment by male parents and emotional violence by male and female parents.

# Sexual and community violence and disability

Associations between dependent variables and child with disabilities in the household

Outcome variable	$\beta$	SE	z value	p value
Sexual Violence	-0.044	1.014	-0.044	0.965
Community sexual violence	0.545	0.693	0.786	0.432
Community physical violence	0.454	2.399	0.189	0.850

There was **no significant** association between child disability and sexual violence and community violences.

# Factors associated for child maltreatment

Summary of the findings on associated factors for maltreatment of children with disabilities

## Significant risk factors

Biological parent

Parent stress

## Significant protective factors

Older child age

Parental respectable behaviour

Food security

## Not significant

Other variables from child, parent and family socio-demographic and psychological factors

# Discussion

# Interpretation of results

- Increased vulnerability for children with disabilities regarding maltreatment by **male parents** and **emotional violence from both male and female parents**, but not others
- Being a biological parent and parental stress may increase maltreatment, while **older child age**, **parental respectable behaviour**, and **food security** may reduce maltreatment of children with disabilities.



# Limitations

- Binary child disability variable may lead to under- or overestimation of the population.
- The small sample size for the subgroup may lack the power to detect significant associations.



# Next steps

- Compare the findings with existing literature to understand how they align or differ
- Conduct **moderator analyses** to see if children with disabilities benefit more or less from the PfR programme in Uganda, compared to those without disabilities
- Incorporate **qualitative research** to gain deeper insights into the experiences of children with disabilities and their families





# Recommendations

- **Further research:** More sensitive measurements of disabilities, other potential risk or protective factors related to child maltreatment, using larger or more diverse samples
- **Policy implications** Advocate for inclusive policies and promote evidence-based inclusive interventions
- **Practice implications:** Tailor targeted interventions and supports for maximum impact

# THANK YOU!

## Presenter:

Aya Fujita

University of Oxford

aya.fujita@spi.ox.ac.uk

## Co-authors:

Godfrey Siu (lead-PI)

Jamie Lachman (co-PI)

Frances Gardner

Carolyn Namutebi

Betty Okot

Joseph Kahwa

Julie Riddell

Danny Wight

Richard Sekiwunga

Francisco Calderon



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# Appendix

# Factors associated for child maltreatment

(i) Child socio-demographic and psychosocial characteristics

Child variable	Source	$\beta$	SE	z-value	p-value	IRR
<b>Child age</b>	<b>Parent</b>	<b>-0.137</b>	<b>0.0729</b>	<b>-1.885</b>	<b>0.0594 .</b>	<b>0.871</b>
Child gender	Parent	-0.0022	0.00778	-0.285	0.7754	1.011
Child attendance in school	Parent	0.0109	0.225	0.049	0.961	2.811
Child behaviour problems	Parent	0.0119	0.0142	0.836	0.403	1.011
Child externalising behaviour	Parent	0.0061	0.0198	0.0309	0.757	1.006
Child internalising behaviour	Parent	0.0048	0.0033	1.452	0.147	1.0497
Child prosocial behaviour	Parent	-0.0356	0.0405	-0.879	0.379	0.965

Evidence shows that **older child age** is a significant **protective factor** against maltreatment of children with disabilities.

# Factors associated for child maltreatment

(ii) Parent socio-demographic and psychosocial characteristics

Outcome	Source	$\beta$	SE	z-value	p-value	IRR
Parent age	Parent	-0.00221	0.0078	-0.285	0.775	0.998
Parent gender	Parent	0.136	0.182	0.747	0.455	1.371
Parent disability	Parent	0.0900	0.320	0.281	0.779	2.459
Marital status	Parent	0.0093	0.248	0.378	0.705	1.098
<b>Biological parent</b>	<b>Parent</b>	<b>0.4158</b>	<b>0.200</b>	<b>2.083</b>	<b>0.0373*</b>	<b>1.515</b>
<b>Parent stress</b>	<b>Parent</b>	<b>0.0295</b>	<b>0.0121</b>	<b>2.439</b>	<b>0.0147*</b>	<b>1.0299</b>
Parent depression	Parent	0.0165	0.0157	1.053	0.292	1.0167

Evidence shows that **biological parent** and **parent stress** are significant risk factors against maltreatment of children with disabilities.

# Factors associated for child maltreatment

(iii) Parenting and parent-child relationship factors

Outcome	Source	$\beta$	SE	z-value	p-value	IRR
Positive parenting	Parent	-0.0723	0.0132	-0.545	0.586	0.993
Parent attitudes towards corporal punishment	Parent	0.0315	0.0319	0.986	0.324	1.032
Parent monitoring	Parent	0.0104	0.0212	0.488	0.625	1.010
<b>Parent respectable behaviour</b>	<b>Parent</b>	<b>-0.153</b>	<b>0.0605</b>	<b>-2.529</b>	<b>0.0114*</b>	<b>0.858</b>
Parent support of education	Parent	-0.009	0.0021	0.488	?	0.991
Child gender socialisation	Parent	0.009	0.0021	-0.414	0.669	0.991
Communication about sexual behaviour	Parent	0.004	0.0035	1.117	0.264	1.039

Evidence shows that **parental respectable behaviour** is a significant **protective factor** against maltreatment of children with disabilities.

# Factors associated for child maltreatment

## (iv) IPV

Outcome	Source	$\beta$	SE	z-value	p-value	IRR
Perpetration of IPV (physical + psychological)	Parent	0.0039	0.0147	0.269	0.788	1.0040
Victimisation of IPV (physical + psychological)	Parent	0.0074	0.0110	0.679	0.497	1.0075
Perpetration of IP physical aggression	Parent	0.0182	0.0284	0.639	0.523	1.0183
Victimisation of IP physical aggression	Parent	0.0091	0.0208	0.437	0.662	1.0091
Perpetration of IP psychological aggression	Parent	0.0063	0.0238	0.268	0.789	1.0064
Victimisation of IP psychological aggression	Parent	0.0189	0.0186	1.014	0.311	1.0191
Perpetration of IP coercion	Parent	0.0082	0.0072	1.122	0.262	1.0082
Victimisation of IP coercion	Parent	0.0066	0.0053	1.228	0.219	1.0066
Perpetration of IP sexual violence	Parent	0.0729	0.0507	1.437	0.151	1.0756
Victimisation of IP sexual violence	Parent	-0.0341	0.0331	-1.028	0.304	0.966

# Factors associated for child maltreatment

(v) Family characteristics and family stressors

Outcome	Source	$\beta$	SE	z-value	p-value	IRR
Number of infants (<aged 2) in the household	Parent	-0.0674	0.152	-0.443	0.657	0.935
Number of children (<aged 18) in the household	Parent	0.0519	0.0044	1.191	0.234	1.053
Family stressors	Parent	0.010	0.0058	0.180	0.858	1.011
Relative Poverty	Parent	-0.022	0.0516	-0.435	0.664	0.978
<b>Food security</b>	<b>Parent</b>	<b>-0.135</b>	<b>0.0653</b>	<b>-2.067</b>	<b>0.038*</b>	<b>0.874</b>

Evidence shows that **food security** is a significant **protective factor** against maltreatment of children with disabilities.



# Inferential analysis - 1

Mixed-effects model for step 1: Child maltreatment and disability

$$\log(\lambda_{ij}) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ child disability status} + \beta_2 \text{ gender} + \beta_3 \text{ age} + \beta_4 \text{ biological parent-child relationship} + (1| \text{cluster / individual}) + \epsilon$$

- $\lambda_{ij}$  is the expected frequency and intensity of experiencing maltreatment of maltreatment incidents for the  $j$ th individual within the  $i$ th cluster
- $\log(\lambda_{ijk})$  is the natural logarithm of the expected count
- $\beta_0$  is the intercept
- $\beta_1$  is the fixed effect coefficient for the child disability status
- $\beta_2$ ,  $\beta_3$ , and  $\beta_4$  represents the fixed effect coefficients for covariates. Covariates are caregiver/child gender, caregiver/child age, and biological parent-child relationship
- $1| \text{cluster / individual}$ : Random effect for individuals and clusters

# Inferential analysis - 2

Mixed-effects regression model for step 2: Risk factors for child maltreatment

$$\log(\lambda_{ij}) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ child disability status} + \beta_2 (\text{child disability status} \times \text{predictor}) + (1 | \text{cluster} / \text{individual}) + \epsilon$$

- $\lambda_{ij}$  is the expected frequency and intensity of experiencing maltreatment of maltreatment incidents for the  $j$ th individual within the  $i$ th cluster
- $\log(\lambda_{ijk})$  is the natural logarithm of the expected count
- $\beta_0$  is the intercept
- $\beta_1$  is the fixed effect coefficient for the child disability status
- $\beta_2$  is the fixed effect coefficients for the interaction terms between child disability status and the predictor
- $1 | \text{cluster} / \text{individual}$ : Random effect for individuals and clusters