

Prevalence of Child Abuse: A Review Study

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Abstract: *This study was conducted on prevalence of child abuse: Standard protocol of the systematic literature review was used in this study. Nearly 3 in 4 children - or 300 million children – aged under 2–4 years suffer from child abuse at the hands of parents and caregivers. Every year, there are an estimated 40, 150 homicide deaths in children under 18 years of age, some of which are likely due to child abuse. The search was undertaken from July to September 2021. This drew on published literature in the electronic bibliographic databases of: Academic Search Complete, Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health (CINAHL), Global Health, MEDLINE Web of Knowledge and Scopus and supplemented by scanning the reference lists of papers included for review. Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) and Effective Public Health Practice Project (EPHPP) tools were used to assess the qualitative and quantitative studies. The search strategy retrieved 150 studies. After applying the process of selection, 20 studies were included for review. The study concluded that the Prevalence rates of Child abuse range from 8% to 31% for females and 3% to 17% for males. The highest rates have been reported for boys <18 years, 19.3% and for girls in other countries. Asia has the lowest rates both 11.2% for girls and 4.1% for boys.*

Keywords: Child; Abuse; review study

1. Introduction

Child abuse as raising as a serious public health concern in India, considerably this becomes the global challenge. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines CSA as a coercive act with a child who is unable to provide consent or comprehend, which leading to serious physical or emotional damage.¹ Any intentional harm or mistreatment to a child under 18 years old is considered child abuse. Physical child abuse occurs when a child is purposely physically injured or put at risk of harm by another person.² It is considered offensive in every country worldwide.

Child abuse is connected with a massive impact factor on the child's milestone development and maturation.⁵ It also affects neurological systems and endocrinological system. Such trauma experienced during the abuse has lifetime post traumatic stress disorders. The CSA impactors are at greater risk of developing psychiatric disorders and personality disorders.

About 37% of India's population comprises children underage of 18, with a large proportion of them lacking basic needs such as nutrition, education, and health care. Around 53% of Indian children reported experiencing different kinds of abuse, which included being forced to nude photography, inappropriate touching, and sexual abuse and assault.⁶

Child abuse can be in different forms, the four main types are physical, emotional neglect. According to American national committee states that the neglect represented 54% of confirmed cases of child abuse, 8 % of sexual abuse, 22% physical abuse, 12 % of maltreatment and other 4% of emotional maltreatment.

2. Need for Study

Children are dependent on adults for safety and ongoing nurturing which puts them at risk of maltreatment in many forms.⁷ The effect of maltreatment is often infinitely deep and long - lasting.⁸ Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.⁹

A report by Ministry of Women and Child Development stated that the children of 5 - 12 age group reported the higher level of abuse compared to other age groups. More than 70% of the affected children never reported the matter to anyone. In most cases parents were the abusers. Prevention efforts must stop the problem itself or manifestation of the problemist Indian society the mother plays a significant role in upbringing the child.¹⁰

If mothers are having knowledge regarding child abuse, she can detect the signs of child abuse and can prevent the occurrence of child abuse by educating the child. Keeping this in view the researcher justified the need to improve mother's knowledge by developing a planned teaching programme on "child abuse and its prevention"

3. Methodology

Standard protocol of the systematic literature review was used in this study. The search was undertaken from July to September 2021. The methods and reporting were developed and conducted with systematic methodology.

4. Source of Literature

This drew on published literature in the electronic bibliographic databases of: Academic Search Complete,

Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health (CINAHL), Global Health, MEDLINE Web of Knowledge and Scopus and supplemented by scanning the reference lists of papers included for review.

Search terms

Search terms were applied with various Boolean operators for three core concepts: child abuse; child abuse India; prevalence of child abuse.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The eligibility of studies for review was assessed on a set of inclusion and exclusion criteria, based on the Prevalence of child abuse.

Study selection and data extraction

Studies retrieved from databases were exported to full review and duplicated citations were removed. Abstracts were screened for relevance to the study question and country of the study. All other inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied through assessment of the full text publications. Studies selected for inclusion were transferred to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet for extraction of data items of: setting, population, methods, prevalence of child abuse, and for thematic analysis.

Quality appraisal

Quality of included studies was appraised separately for qualitative and quantitative methods assessing features of study design, methodology and analysis. Studies were classified into strong, moderate and weak based on criteria set within two different tools: Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) and Effective Public Health Practice Project (EPHPP) tools. Qualitative studies were appraised using the CASP tool which contains a checklist of ten screening questions regarding the aim of the research, appropriateness of the qualitative methodology, appropriateness of research design to address aim, appropriateness of recruitment strategy, data collection methods, relationship between researcher and participants, ethical issues, data analysis, statement of findings and value of research. This tool has previously been evaluated, revised and reviewed. Quantitative studies were appraised using the EPHPP tool to rate studies based on given criteria on the basis of: selection bias, study design, confounders, blinding, data collection methods, withdrawals and drop - outs, intervention integrity and analyses. This tool has demonstrated high inter - reliability across individual domains and high intra - class correlation coefficient value. For mixed - method studies, the CASP tool was applied to the qualitative elements and the EPHPP tool to the quantitative elements.

Synthesis of results

The results were synthesized according to the prevalence of child abuse. The results concerning factors were synthesized systematically according to the level at which the support on prevent measures of child abuse. This approach was based on the framework for analysis of impact of early discharge with a health system lens established by The SURE Collaboration for structured and systematic analyses. The results on impact of early discharge were synthesized using thematic analysis and arranged based on the analytical

framework of impact of early discharge affecting health care in low resource. This analytical framework provided a structured and comprehensive perspective on impact of early discharge.

5. Results

The search strategy retrieved 150 studies. After applying the process of selection, 19 studies were included for review. Studies selected for review represented referent countries. The researcher focused on Indian study more.

Quality of studies

Based on the CASP criteria, both qualitative studies reviewed were of moderate quality owing to limitations in the research design, recruitment strategy and data analysis. Based on the Effective Public Health Practice Project (EPHPP), none of the quantitative studies were high - quality ranking because all were moderately weighted cross - sectional design. Eight studies were moderate quality, while eight were weak based on design, unreliable data collection method and no controlling for confounding factors. Of the six mixed - method studies, five were weak in quantitative and moderate in qualitative design; one was moderate, and one was weak in both qualitative and quantitative design.

Prevalence of child abuse

A study implies that the inadequate of knowledge among the parents regarding child abuse, including physical violence, sexual violence, mental abuse and neglect. Child abuse cannot be categorized by genders as both male and female affected at some levels. It was noted that the, majority of child abuse caused by parent's lack of knowledge regarding children's education and protection (POSCO and RTE) Acts and also most parents were in favour of having better career prospects for Male child only, Parents were also unaware about physical, emotional and mental health of their child.¹¹ Majority of the parents have of the opinion that children should be distinguished based on academic performances. The study also recommended various measures to fight against child abuse.

As a parent, it is very much essential to understand the child and their environment. Sometimes, child abuse can result in post traumatic stress disorder and psychosomatic and psychological disorders which leads to impacted adulthood. More mass media reforms are needed to spread awareness. More studies are need to be conducted among children and parents.¹¹

The study discussed that child abuse more prevalent in urban areas than in rural areas of India and also the study found that a high frequency of physical abuse among the but the severity of abuse was low. The study implies that child abuse (with 78.4% of children between the ages of 4–12 yrs.) as a result of living in a deprived area of the town. This study also highlighted that often child abuse caused of economic distress; Over half the children who were classed as homeless (i.e., living in drainage pipes, under tarpaulins, flyovers and those living in the open) reported child abuse While child abuse may seem high in urban or slum areas, the disadvantage with rural areas may be that abuse may go

under the radar. They may be under - reported or non reported within local traditions such as culture or neglect, all impacts rooted in poverty and volatile socioeconomic circumstances.¹²

The study discussed the prevalence and spectrum of child abuse among adolescents in Kerala, South India. The study conducted among adolescents in the 9 - 14 yrs. of age group, 1614 respondents (688 boys and 926 girls) were participated, the results discussed 36 % of boys and 35 % of girls had experienced different forms of child abuse at some point during their lifetime. Most instances at living environment at their own home based.¹¹ Feelings of insecurity and isolation at home, of being maltreated by parents and of being depressed and a greater number of children at home were who had experienced child abuse, compared to those who had not. Child abuse is widely prevalent and both boys and girls are equally susceptible. There is a need to evolve strategies to protect children from child abuse and maltreatment and the programmes should address both genders.¹³

Another study said that the prevalence of child abuse among girls and boys in schools. It was reported by 302 (60.4%) of the 500 children interviewed. Child abuse was seen to be more prevalent among boys than girls. Physical abuse was reported by 38 students. Only 65 (39%) parents knew that their children were being abused. Abused children were more likely to report symptoms such as tired, headache, loose motions, fever and depression. Teachers were found to be ignorant of the reported issue. Child abuse is a major problem among school children. Abused children complained of psychosomatic symptoms which are potentially harmful for their further development. Teachers must be given training to handle this issue. Pediatricians should always consider child abuse and maltreatment as a causative agent for illness and plan for appropriate interventions.¹⁴

A case study estimated that the group of 2 - 17 yrs. Old indicated that a minimum of 64% of these children in Asia, 56% in North America, 50% in Africa, 34% in Latin America, and 12% in Europe experienced past child abuse. An estimation shows that Asia has the highest number, with over 700 million children exposed; Africa follows with over 200 million children; then Latin America, Northern America, and Europe combined show over 100 million children exposed. The results discussed that globally, a minimum of over 1 billion children were exposed to child abuse and violence during 2014. For the analysis, it found that a minimum of over 1.4 billion of the nearly 2 billion children aged 2 to 17 years experienced physical, emotional, and/or sexual violence in the previous year. Though prevalences of child abuse and violence were high in both the developing and developed world, the minimum number estimated as suffering victimization in the developing world in 2014 exceeded 1 billion children.¹⁵

The study was suggested that prevalence and dynamics of child abuse among children in India (42%) had faced different forms of abuse in one from or the other. Among the respondents, 48% boys and 39% girls faced different forms of abuse. The prevalence of sexual abuse in upper and

middle class was found to be proportionately higher than in that lower or lower - middle class.²⁰ Sexual abuse was found to be prevalent in both joint and nuclear families.¹⁶ Majority of the abusers were people known to the child. Child abuse and maltreatment was higher by strangers. Sexual abuse of children was very often a pre - planned insidious abuse of a relationship by an abuser over the child. Child abuse was significantly associated with parents' level of education and occupation, financial problems, mother's age at the birth of the first child, number of children at home, crowding index and maternal perceptions of abuse and maltreatment.¹⁷

While the studies clearly analysed an increase in the abuse against children, the paper discussed the prevalence of child abuse and how its effects of child abuse on the overall growth and inclusive development of the nation.²¹ While there are different types of abuse that are faced by the Indian children, it also highlights the urgent necessity to bring about the much - needed actions.¹⁸

This research discussed that the fact that child abuse not only impairs the child's productivity once they gone through the child abuse. It is therefore important for the society awakens to the call of protecting and enhancing their childhood. This would allow greater participation of children to the good of the world civilization.¹⁹ Society needs to realise that child abuse is existent and can happen anywhere around us. Children need to be educated about Child Protection laws and Childline Services at their young age so that they could protect themselves.²¹

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