



Child Maltreatment and The Effects on Adolescents

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Abstract

Child maltreatment in the forms of physical, verbal, sexual or general neglect, have long-term impacts on adolescents. As a result of child maltreatment, adolescents are impacted in their education, mental health, and delinquency. The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between child maltreatment on adolescent mental health, their ability for educational attainment and recidivism. The study used a match-comparison method with secondary data from The Adolescent Outcome of Physically Abused School Children (2008). The study gathered its data through adolescent interviews, behavior ratings, and self-report questionnaires. Purposive sampling was used to create the sample which consists of 116 families, 58 families were those with history of child maltreatment and were compared to 58 families with no history of child maltreatment. The study results revealed that both parental physical and verbal abuse were positively related to the adolescent delinquent behavior, and higher mental health rates. There is a need for early intervention and further research to better understand the individual effects of each type of child maltreatment.

Introduction

Significance of Study:

- Help the Child Welfare System identify families in need and provide preventative services to the children.
- Allow social workers to understand the importance of addressing all aspects of a child's life in order to provide support and services to help develop positive experiences
- The field can provide new resources supporting the child rather than punish children who are victims of child maltreatment.

Purpose of Study:

- This study will explore the relationship between different forms of child maltreatment and the influence it has on a child's schooling, mental health, and delinquent behaviors.
- The study focuses on Physical abuse and Verbal Abuse as forms of child maltreatment.

Research Question

- What is the relationship between child maltreatment and adolescent mental health (psychological) development and their ability for educational attainment?

Hypothesis

- Those who have experienced child abuse are at higher risk of exposure to internalizing problems such as depression, social withdrawal, and external problems, including delinquency. The experience of child abuse puts adolescents at higher risk for mental health and difficulty with educational attainment.

Literature Review

Mental Health

- Childhood physical abuse predicted an increase in depression, anxiety, and medical diagnoses (Springer et al., 2007).
- Springer et al. (2007) further emphasizes the negative effects of child maltreatment and connects childhood maltreatment to both physical and mental health issues children may experience as an adult.

Education Attainment

- Children in group homes had lower scores in standardized testing, grade retention, and school absences (Romano et al., 2014).
- Those who experienced neglect had higher rates of general academic difficulties, while those who experience physical abuse faced behavioral problems at school (Maclean et al., 2020).

Delinquency

- Joseph Ryan and Mark Testa (2005) stated that 9%-29% of children maltreated engage in delinquent behavior and that the substantiated cases of maltreatment average 47% higher in delinquency
- Physical abuse was linked to an increase of both violent and non-violent offenses (Mersky & Reynolds, 2007).

Methods

Research Design and Data Collection Procedures

- The Adolescent Outcome of Physically Abused School Children (2008), consisted of an assessment of adolescents who were physically abused as children and were compared to a non-maltreated group in order to determine the effects of the abuse (Salzinger et al., 2008).
- The data for the original study, The Adolescent Outcome of Physically Abused School Children (2008), was gathered in a span of five years. Data was collected through in-person interviews, behavior ratings, and self-report questionnaires (Salzinger et al., 2008).
- The current study is a secondary data analyses with a baseline data of 116 families used a match-comparison design.

Sampling and Sample Method

- The current study included 116 families from the original study
- The sample was divided in half. Half of the sample had a history of child maltreatment which was compared to the group with no history of child maltreatment.

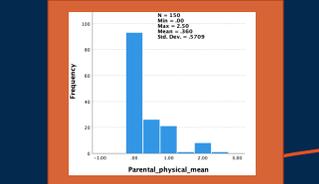
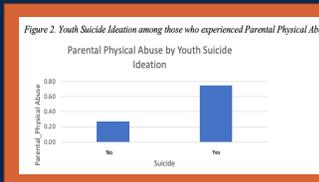
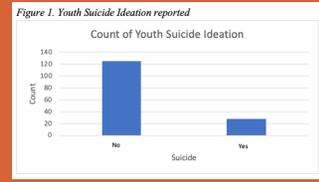
Measures

- Adolescents were given Achenbach's "Youth Self Report," which measured social connections, Anxiety, Depression, delinquent behavior, thought, and attention problems (Salzinger et al., 2008)
- Youth's suicide ideation was measured through the Youth Risk Behavior Survey
- Delinquency was measured through the Self-Reported Delinquency Measure. The Self-Reported Delinquency Measure included 38 items questioning possible delinquent behaviors.

Demographics	n	%
Ethnicity		
Black	58	37.9
White	10	6.5
Hispanic	83	54.2
Asian	2	1.3
In School		
Yes	145	94.8
No	8	5.2
High School		
Yes	139	90.8
No	14	9.2
Grade School		
Yes	0	0
No	153	100

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Parental Physical Abuse	-	.477	.208*	-.100	.360**
2. Parental Verbal Abuse		-	.336**	-.037	.416**
3. Delinquency			-	-.223**	.351**
4. Educational Beliefs				-	-.094
5. Depression					-

**Correlation is significant at the .01 level
*Correlation is significant at the .05 level



Results

Pearson's Correlation

- Higher levels of parental physical abuse were associated with higher delinquency rates
- Higher levels of parental verbal abuse were associated with higher delinquency rates.
- Higher levels of parental physical abuse were associated with higher levels youth depression.
- Parental verbal abuse was associated with higher levels of youth depression.
- Parental physical abuse was not associated with the youth's educational beliefs.
- Parental verbal abuse was not associated to the youth's education beliefs.

Mann Whitney U-Test

- Youth who did not report suicide ideation, had a lower frequency of parental physical abuse than those who did report suicide ideation
- Youth who did not report suicide ideation (mean rank = 73.09) were not significantly different than those who did report suicide ideation after being verbally abused

Discussion

Practice and Policy Implications

- The study contributes to social work practice by further emphasizing the importance of early intervention in order to avoid child maltreatment. Early intervention is also needed for those experiencing early signs of delinquency or mental health needs.
- The results of the study show social workers the negative outcomes due to child abuse and the need to combat the abuse before it becomes detrimental to the child's future.
- The data reported is from the adolescents directly rather than school personnel or parents which keeps the focus on the client's needs.
 - Examples: Mindfulness and meditation in classrooms as part of daily schedules
 - Screening for early detection of mental health

Strength

- The match comparison design allows for a more controlled comparison between the adolescents who experience physical and verbal abuse to those who did not.

Limitation

- The secondary-data is a limit to the study as the sample and methods of obtaining data may also hinder the responses from each youth.