Child Maltreatment and The Effects on Adolescents

California State University, Fullerton

Jasmine Navarro-Marroquin

Abstract

Child maltreatment in the forms of physical, sexual, emotional 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 and 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 in-person interviews, behavior ratings, and self-report questionnaires. Purposeful sampling was used to control 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 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.

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 this 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 analysis 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 posing questionable delinquent behaviors.

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 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 = 72.09) 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 helps 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

Strengths

- 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.

Table 1: Demographics (N=116)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>116</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td>73</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td>43</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Home, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for Parental Physical Abuse, Parental Verbal Abuse, Depression, Educational Behavior, and Delinquency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parental Physical Abuse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Verbal Abuse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delinquency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlation coefficient is significant at the .05 level

Figure 1: Youth Suicidal Ideation Counted by those who experienced Physical/Verbal Abuse

Figure 2: Youth Suicidal Ideation Among those who experienced General Physical Abuse

Figure 3: Parental Physical Abuse to Youth Suicide Ideation