

The current prevalence of child sexual abuse worldwide: A systematic review and meta-analysis

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ABSTRACT

Child abuse is a matter of serious concern in the whole world. For identification of CSA (Child Sexual Abuse), it is necessary to do analysis on continuous base across the worldwide to see the increase or decrease trends. The aim of the study is to clarify the current occurrence of CSA in terms of information such as geographical region, type of abuse and most common types of abuse occurrences in the world. In this research, the analysis studies published between 2005 and 2019 are included that state CSA (Child Sexual Abuse) in boys and girls below 19 years. The current study also reveals random effect meta-analysis and analyzes the type of the abuse explored in different studies. The research included studies of the related concern from countries such as Pakistan, India, Netherland, Ethiopia, Canada, China, Columbia, Egypt, Lebanon, Malaysia, Russia and Iceland. This research is helpful in highlighting the issue of child sexual abuse so that the concerned authorities take steps for the prevention of the issue.

Keywords: Child abuse, neglect, worldwide, prevalence, systematic review, meta-analysis

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INTRODUCTION

Giovannoni (1971) defines “abuse” as acts of commission that consequence in destruction while the “neglect” as acts of omission that have destructive effects. Abuse is an exploitation of the human rights. According to Farah Malik, (2010) says from last two decades child abuse has become a focus of concern for government and public. But, unfortunately in many countries non availability of prevailing situation of child abuse at the government level makes it more critical. Adam J. Zolotor (2009) describe that in all over the world, some types of violence remain undefined. WHO defines violence as “The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation” This definition cover the range of possible and actual violence extended on children and violence is a physical use of power which is defenseless to children or any person or a group which results in many kinds of physical and mental damages.

Adnan Ali Hyder (2007) describes that the children face different types of violence or abuse (physical, sexual, neglect, emotional and psychological) and at several stages (individual, household, institutional, and societal). The World Report on Violence and Health, released by the World Health Organization (WHO), express the violence against children is a public-health issue which has a worldwide importance. Adnan Ali Hyder (2007) reported that South Asia has 23% of the world’s population and is one of the world’s poorest regions child sexual abuse and prostitution, child trafficking and homelessness are very usually reported concerns in countries, like India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, and Pakistan. According to Adnan Ali Hyder (2007) says that a very small age (5-14) children are working as labour the largest number of working between 40 and 115 million children are reported in India. While in Pakistan 8-10 million children are working in different sectors are facing unsafe environments and they may also be subject to abuse and exploitation. All this enlightens the importance of the issue.

Child abuse is an important concerning issue now a days, in many countries which has directly engage to the damages of human right and deprivation. Many studies regarding this issue are addressed. This issue can be raised at higher level of government to reduce it. Adam J. Zolotor (2009) describe that any type of abuse can bring consideration when there is a witness of that abuse or the victim or perpetrator themselves tells about abuse. Though, child abuse may occur from some close relationships or from educational institute where they are studying. We can conclude the clear approximation about the prevalence of abuse through questioning from perpetrator and Victim. This study revolved around the twelve Published articles related to CSA concerns from 2005-2019. The main aim of this study the explore the society human rights issues

(Child Abuse and Neglect) in all over the world because it is the most concerning issue now a day in everywhere. There are very limited researches on this topic in many countries.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A systematic literature on Child Abuse and neglect search took place in March 2017. More than 120 studies with the different key words discovering from the electronic literature folders (www.digitallibrary.edu.pk, www.scholar.google.com, www.google.com) like as Child Abuse, Child Neglect, Child Harassment, Child Maltreatment, Child unwanted and unlawful sexual experiences and Child Sexual abuse for abstract screening. After removal of duplicates, we were left with 45 potentially relevant Studies related to the topic. The list of these articles are given below in the “Appendix”. Out of which 12 articles were selected for this meta-analysis. We were found in which the only Ten researches fulfill the criteria that is defined in the following. In this study Grey literature and unpublished studies were not included.

SELECTION OF STUDY

This study included only published papers and articles and exclude case studies for child abuse, neglect, domestic violence, sexual abuse, unlawful and unwanted sexual experiences. The main objective of this concerning issue is to describe the prevalence of child abuse. This study contains sufficient material to determine the prevalence of abuse. Ten articles are selected through screening process. This study also included searching of documents which are published in specialist journals relating to child abuse, neglect and sexual abuse. In addition to that study it is considering the importance due to rare article published on that area of study. From past two to three decades there are many cases reported through all over the world, so the significance of the study is intense. Child abuses was not explored or discuss on a large range of material with meta-analysis review in previous studies. The search is based on child abuse or neglect, domestic violence, sexual abuse, unwanted and unlawful sexual experiences. Those studies were selected that cover the non-clinical aspect of the child sexual abuse.

We included such type of studies which relate to the prevalence of CSA and excluded case studies. In those studies data collection was after 2005 to 2019, participants were below 19 years old. For article selection, only those articles are use in this analysis that are published and based on positivism or mixed method approach. Because in these studies the sample size were extremely high. Only those articles are selected whose the sample size more than 200. Participants may be male or female either they are school going or worker.

DATA EXTRACTION

From the selected studies, the research takes out descriptive characteristics shown in Table 1 (e.g. Author of study, Publication Year, Year of data collection, Sample size, Age of the respondent, gender and region). Twelve selected studies from which total sample size is 21074 and range of size was 200 to 6592. With an average approximately of the sample size was 1756. From the selected studies the 51% respondents are female and remaining is male. In the majority of studies, a cross-sectional design was used. In cases where CSA is reported separately for boys and girls but there is no information about the total number of boys and girls in the sample, we assumed that half of the participants were male and half female.

The following methodological moderators were take-out show in the Table 2: sampling method, (random sample from the general population, school-based or other specific population), number of items used for the assessment of CSA, method of data collection, and the response rate. The majority of the studies data collection instrument was questionnaire. The method of data collection in only one study was Parents reporting and remaining were self-reporting. Most of the samples were recruited in schools.

Table 1: Descriptive information of included studies (N = 12)

References	Total (N)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Age (mean or range)	% age between this range	Region	Year of data collection
DerejeWorku (2006)	323	0%	100%	12-17	86.3%	Ethiopia	2005
Paula de Bruijn (2006)	1700	48%	52%	14-18	100%	Netherland	2006
JingQi Chen(2006)	351	0%	100%	<16	100%	China	2004
Michele L. Ybarra (2007)	1515	100%	0%	10-15	100%	California	2006
Gisela Priebe (2008)	4339	46.43%	53.56%	18.15	100%	Sweden	Unclear
Desmond K. Runyan (2009)	697	50%	50%	<18	100%	Columbia, Egypt, India, Lebanon, Malaysia, Russia	Unclear
MeenaMathur (2009)	200	50%	50%	10-14	100%	India	2009

William Chi Wai Wong (2009)	6592	49.9%	51.1%	13-16	100%	China	2005
Vivian L. Towe (2009)	565	100%	0%	5-19	100%	Pakistan	2003-04
Harriet L. MacMillan (2013)	1928	48.88%	51.1%	14-16	100%	Canada	unclear
Adam J. Zolotor (2009)	571	50%	50%	12-17	100%	Columbia ,India ,Russia, Iceland	unclear
David Finkelhor (2014)	2293	50%	50%	15-17	100%	United States	2003, 2008, 2011

Table 2: Methodological study characteristics

References	Response rate	Sampling	Instrument	Method of data collection	No of items CSA
DerejeWorku (2006)	17.3%	From School	Questionnaire	Self-Reporting	3
Paula de Bruijn (2006)	unclear	From School	Questionnaire	Self-Reporting	3
JingQi Chen(2006)	80.7%	From School	Questionnaire	Self-Reporting	unclear
Michele L. Ybarra (2007)	26%	Online & From School	Questionnaire	Self-Reporting	unclear
Gisela Priebe (2008)	77.2%	From School	Questionnaire	Self-Reporting	unclear
Desmond K. Runyan (2009)	unclear	From Home & School	Questionnaire	Parents reporting	unclear
MeenaMathur (2009)	unclear	From Street	Questionnaire	Self-Reporting	5
William Chi Wai Wong (2009)	99.68%	From School	Questionnaire	Self-Reporting	unclear
Vivian L. Towe (2009)	99%	From Street	Questionnaire	Self-Reporting	unclear
Harriet L. MacMillan (2013)	unclear	unclear	Questionnaire	Self-Reporting	5
Adam J. Zolotor (2009)	unclear	From School	Questionnaire	Self-Reporting	unclear

David Finkelhor (2014)	unclear	From Public	Telephone Survey	Self-Reporting	unclear
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RESULTS

We include seven studies of the related concern in which six countries (Pakistan, India, Netherland, Ehiopia, Canada and China) were included. Two more studies extracted in which seven countries are included and one study conduct through online data collected with no country defined and result of analysis is based on total sample size the 12 selected studies that is 21074 and the range of sample size was 200 to 6592 with an mean range of 1756 approximately. A large range of samples were recruited in Schools and they were assessed with self-report instruments.

Dereje Worku (2006) determines that 222 (68.7%) out of the total number of respondents, were reporting some kind of sexual abuse in their phase of life. In this study the verbal harassment (51.35%) were the most common type of abuse and the rate of prevalence is 44.2%. The unrecognized persons (36.0%), were the indicated abusers in this study. Paula de Bruijn (2006) explain 63% respondent also reported that they face sexual abuse as the most common type of abuse was verbal harassment. One of study results conclude that the street children face a high level of psychological and verbal abuse, both within their family and working on the streets. Meena Mathur (2009) explains to enlighten the type and intensity of abuse in children, the age and income were used as significant parameters and they also rise confident research questions as to whether child abuse increases with increase in age and income or vice versa. Table 1 depicts the main characteristics of the studies. Table 2 provides an overview of methodological aspects of the studies and Table 3 shows the victim of child abuse and the most common types of abuse in each study.

Table 3 Rate of victim and the most common type of abuse

Studies	Total Victim	most common types of abuse
“Child sexual abuse and its outcomes among high school students in southwest Ethiopia”, DerejeWorku (2006)	68.7%	verbal harassment
“A risky boundary: Unwanted sexual behaviour among youth” , Paula de Bruijn (2006)	63%	verbal harassment

“Child sexual abuse is largely hidden from the adult society An epidemiological study of adolescents’ disclosures” , Gisela Priebe (2008)	45.5%	contact abuse without penetration
“Incidence, type and intensity of abuse in street children in India” , MeenaMathur (2009)	61.8%	psychological and verbal abuse
“Child physical and sexual abuse in a community sample of young adults: Results from the Ontario Child Health Study” , Harriet L. MacMillan (2013)	40%	Physical Abuse
“Examining the Overlap in Internet Harassment and School Bullying:Implications for School Intervention” , Michele L. Ybarra (2007)	34%	Online Harassment
“The development and piloting of the ISPCAN Child Abuse Screening Tool—Parent version (ICAST-P)” , Desmond K. Runyan (2009)	25%	Physical Abuse
“Street Life and Drug Risk Behaviors Associated with Exchanging Sex Among Male Street Children in Lahore, Pakistan” , Vivian L. Towe (2009)	40%	Sexual Abuse
“Child sexual abuse in Henan province, China: associations with sadness, suicidality, and risk behaviors among adolescent girls” , JingQi Chen (2006)	21.9%	Physical Abuse
“The Lifetime Prevalence of Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Assault Assessed in Late Adolescence” , David Finkelhor	25%	Physical Abuse
“ISPCAN Child Abuse Screening Tool Children’s Version (ICAST-C): Instrument development and multi-national pilot testing” , Adam J. Zolotor (2009)	51%	Psychological Abuse
“Individual, familial and community determinants of child physical abuse among high-school students in China” , William Chi Wai Wong (2009)	41.2%	Physical abuse

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND CONCLUSION

For identification of CSA either increase or decrease, it is necessary to estimate CSA on continuous bases world-wide. The future research can use our results in order to obtain information about changes in prevalence estimates of CSA that will use for comparison of findings. A second reason is the increase of data stemming from primary studies regarding CSA and in order to keep up with this flow of information and to reflect on the circumstances of CSA from a worldwide

perspective. The aimed to describe the current condition of CSA by including only studies conducted on children and adolescents and found several publications that reported on the prevalence of CSA in this age group. The rate of child sexual treatment in society, increase the different harmful aspects that resulting many diseases either physical or psychological. According to Dereje Worku (2006) as he describes that the sexual harassment between children and adolescents increase the threat of HIV infection, unplanned pregnancy, and other physical and psychological issues in society. So, there is a need to estimates of CSA worldwide regularly.

This study describes the trending of previous reports regarding the child physical abuse that are actually very common in the whole world. Many studies regarding this issue are addressed. This study connecting the previous data at child abuse and neglect articles. Child Abuse disclosure is very complicated procedure, the most of the part of child abuse is ignored or hide from the adult society, especially from professionals. There are so many studies in all over the world reporting CSA and its magnitudes. The selected studies define very high rate of occurrence of sexual abuse in society.

This finding of the defined studies corresponds the most common type of CSAs were Physical and verbal harassment and the most respondents report for the verbal harassment which has a higher rate rather than physical. Due to high rate of abuse increase the rare diseases (HIV infection, unplanned pregnancy, and other physical and psychological issues) in society.

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Harriet L. MacMillan , (2013) “Child physical and sexual abuse in a community sample of young adults: Results from the Ontario Child Health Study” , Child Abuse & Neglect 37 pg 14– 21

David Finkelhor , (2014) “The Lifetime Prevalence of Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Assault Assessed in Late Adolescence” , Journal of Adolescent Health xxx pg 1-5

Appendix

Article	Year of Publication	Author	Journal/Source
Effects of Domestic Violence on Perinatal and Early-Childhood Mortality: Evidence From North India	2006	Saifuddin Ahmed	American Journal of Public Health
Child Abuse in India	2011	Dr. Mohammad Reza Iravani	Asian Social Science
Cultural Issues in Disclosures of Child Sexual Abuse	2010	Lisa Aronson Fontes, Carol Plummer	Journal of Child Sexual Abuse
Walking Delicately Around Mental Handicap, Sex Education and Abuse in Pakistan	1996	M. Miles	Child Abuse Review

Child Abuse and Neglect and Cognitive Function at 14 Years of Age: Findings From a Birth Cohort	2010	Ryan Mills, Rosa Alati, Michael O'Callaghan, Jake M. Najman, Gail M. Williams,	American Academy of Pediatrics
Avoidance and confrontation: social work practice in relation to domestic violence and child abuse	2009	Catherine Humphreys	Child & Family Social Work
Prevention of child sexual abuse in China: Knowledge, attitudes, and communication practices of parents of elementary school children	2007	JingQi Chen, Michael P. Dunne, Ping Han	Child Abuse & Neglect
Child abuse in China: a yet-to-be-acknowledged 'social problem' in the Chinese Mainland	2005	D. P. Qiao and Y. C. Chan †	Child & Family Social Work
CHILD MALTREATMENT, BULLYING, GENDER-BASED HARASSMENT, AND ADOLESCENT DATING VIOLENCE: MAKING THE CONNECTIONS	2009	David A. Wolfe	American Psychological Association
Child prostitution: global health burden, research needs, and interventions	2002	Brian M Willis, Barry S Levy	PUBLIC HEALTH

The prevalence of unwanted and unlawful sexual experiences reported by Danish adolescents: Results from a national youth survey in 2002	2006	KARIN HELWEG-LARSEN1	ActaPædiatrica
Trends in Youth Reports of Sexual Solicitations, Harassment and Unwanted Exposure to Pornography on the Internet	2007	Kimberly J. Mitchell	Journal of Adolsecent Health
DISCLOSURE OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE What Does the Research Tell Us About the Ways That Children Tell?	2005	Kamala London and Maggie Bruck, Stephen J. Ceci	Psychology, Public Policy, and Law
Review of the contemporary literature on how children report sexual abuse to others: Findings, methodological issues...	2008	Kamala, Maggie Bruck	Memory
CHILD ABUSE IN INDIA: AN EMPIRICAL REPORT ON PERCEPTIONS	1992	UMAA. SEGAL	Child Ahuse& Neglect
Individual and Contextual Determinants of Domestic Violence in North India	2006	Michael A. Koenig, Rob Stephenson	American Journal of Public Health
School-Based Peer Sexual Harassment	1999	Sandra Kopels and David R. Dupper	Child welfare

The Co-Occurrence of Childhood Sexual Abuse, Adult Sexual Assault, Intimate Partner Violence, and Sexual Harassment...	2008	Rebecca Campbell, Megan R. Greeson,	Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology
The prevalence of child sexual abuse in community and student samples: A meta-analysis	2009	Noemi Pereda , Georgina Guilera , Maria Forn	Clinical Psychology Review
Individual, familial and community determinants of child physical abuse among high-school students in China	2009	William Chi Wai Wong, Wei Qing Chen , William B. Goggins , Catherine S. Tang	Social Science & Medicine
A Global Perspective on Child Sexual Abuse: Meta-Analysis of Prevalence Around the World	2011	Marije Stoltenborgh, Marinus H. van IJzendoorn, Eveline M. Euser and Marian J. Bakermans-Kranenburg	American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children
ISPCAN Child Abuse Screening Tool Children's Version (ICAST-C): Instrument development and multi-national pilot testing_	2009	Adam J. Zolotor, Desmond K. Runyan, Michael P. Dunne, Dipty Jain c, Helga R. Péturs, Clemencia Ramirez, Elena Volkova	Child Abuse & Neglect
The Lifetime Prevalence of Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Assault Assessed in Late Adolescence	2014	David Finkelhor, Ph.D., Anne Shattuck, M.A.	Journal of Adolescent Health

Child sexual abuse in Henan province, China: associations with sadness, suicidality, and risk behaviors among adolescent girls	2006	JingQi Chen, M.D., Ph.D., Michael P. Dunne,	Journal of Adolescent Health
Street Life and Drug Risk Behaviors Associated with Exchanging Sex Among Male Street Children in Lahore, Pakistan	2009	Vivian L. Towe	Journal of Adolescent Health
The development and piloting of the ISPCAN Child Abuse Screening Tool—Parent version (ICAST-P)	2009	Desmond K. Runyan, Michael P. Dunne, Adam J. Zolotor	Child Abuse & Neglect
Examining the Overlap in Internet Harassment and School Bullying: Implications for School Intervention	2007	Michele L. Ybarra	Journal of Adolescent Health
Child physical and sexual abuse in a community sample of young adults: Results from the Ontario Child Health Study	2013	Harriet L. MacMillan	Child Abuse & Neglect
Incidence, type and intensity of abuse in street children in India	2009	MeenaMathur, PrachiRathore	Child Abuse & Neglect
Child sexual abuse is largely hidden from the adult society An epidemiological study of adolescents' disclosures	2008	Gisela Priebe , Carl GöranSvedin	Child Abuse & Neglect

A risky boundary: Unwanted sexual behaviour among youth	2006	Paula de Bruijn, Ingrid Burrie& Frits van Wel	Journal of Sexual Aggression
Child sexual abuse and its outcomes among high school students in southwest Ethiopia	2006	DerejeWorku , AbebeGebremariam	TROPICAL DOCTOR