

The Prevalence and Forms of Child Abuse Among King Saud University Students in Riyadh City, Saudi Arabia

Allbraheem Somayya A^{1*}, Saeedi Fajr A², Alalawi Ahmed H³, Abusaif Shima M⁴, Altorbak Nora A⁵, Alharbi Abdullah A⁶, Alruwaithi Ziad A⁷, Almazrooa Sara N⁸, Almuqrin Saad M⁹ and Alhazmi Ahmad M¹⁰

¹Medical intern, Jazan university, Saudi Arabia

²Teaching assistant, pediatric department, king abdulaziz university hospital, Saudi Arabia

³Medical intern, Arabian Gulf university, Bahrain

⁴Medical intern, king abdulaziz university hospital, Saudi Arabia

⁵5th year medical student, Qassim university, Saudi Arabia

⁶Medical intern, Umm AlQura university, Saudi Arabia

⁷Intensive Care Resident, king Faisal hospital, Saudi Arabia

⁸Medical intern, Princess nora bint abdulrahman university, Saudi Arabia

⁹General Physician, King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences, Saudi Arabia

¹⁰Medical intern, Medical University of Lublin, Poland

***Corresponding Author:** Allbraheem Somayya A, General Physician, Jazan university, Saudi Arabia.

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Abstract

Background: Child abuse is any action by another person adult or child, that causes significant harm to a child.

Objectives: To estimate the prevalence, forms and outcomes of child abuse among king Saud University students.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted among King Saud University students in Riyadh city during educational year 2015 - 2016. Data was collected by using standardized, pre-tested self-administered questionnaire. A two stages random sampling method was used for the selection of participants.

Results: A total of 434 students aged between 18 and 24 years participated in this study. Most of them (91%) reported experiencing some forms of abuse during childhood. Physical and emotional forms were recalled by 83.9% and 74.9% of students respectively, while 38.5% reported exposure to some sexually inappropriate behaviors. Stranger (not a family member) persons were the common offenders in emotional and sexual abuse, whereas parents were in physical abuse. The exposure to abuse was significantly associated with existence of parents or adults in home arguing with each other and parents or adults in home who hit one another (p-value < 0.000 and 0.004 respectively).

Conclusion and Recommendations: Child abuse represents a public health problem, and there is association between family circumstances and its occurrence. Programs for prevention of child abuse and for treating and rehabilitating victims are urgently needed.

Keywords: Child Abuse; Prevalence; Students; King Saud University

Introduction

Child abuse, which refers to child maltreatment, includes all forms of physical and emotional maltreatment, sexual abuse, neglect, and exploitation that results in actual or potential harm to the child's health, development or dignity. Within this broad definition, five subtypes can be distinguished: physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and negligent treatment, emotional abuse, and exploitation [1]. Physical abuse of a child is defined as those acts of commission by a caregiver that cause actual physical harm or have the potential for harm. Sexual abuse is defined as those acts where a caregiver uses a child for sexual gratification [2]. Emotional abuse of a child is commonly defined as a pattern of behavior by parents or caregivers that can seriously interfere with a child's cognitive, emotional, psychological or social development. Emotional abuse of a child - also referred to as psychological maltreatment [3]. Neglect refers to the failure of a parent to provide for the development of the child - where the parent is in a position to do so - in one or more of the following areas: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter and safe living conditions [4].

A study examining the risk factors for child abuse found that the influence of the occurrence varied by type of abuse [5]. So, child abuse is a global problem, therefore a number of studies, mostly from the developed world, have suggested that certain characteristics of children increase the risk for abuse. These risk factors are not present in all social and cultural contexts, but provide an overview when attempting to understand the causes of child abuse, such as; Age, which mostly occur to the children under 18 years of age according to WHO [6]. Sex, usually appear in most countries, girls are at higher risk than boys for infanticide, sexual abuse, educational and nutritional neglect [7]. Relationship, which detect a number of characteristics of relationships within families or among intimate partners, friends and peers that may increase the risk of child maltreatment. Community and social factor show a number of characteristics of communities and societies that may increase the risk of child abuse [6]. The lifelong consequences of child abuse have been found to impair the current and future health and well-being of the children in every country and cultural context in which it has been investigated. The morbidity, disability and mortality caused by child abuse and neglect lead to substantial human suffering, social disadvantage and economic loss [8].

The international studies reveal that approximately 20% of women and 5 - 10% Of men report being sexually abused as children, while 25 - 50% of all children report being physically abused. Additionally, many children are subject to emotional abuse (sometimes referred to as psychological abuse) and to neglect [9]. The National Child Abuse and Neglect Data Survey (NCANDS) in 2004 estimated that 1.2% of children were maltreated in the USA. In addition, the superior National Incidence Study (NIS) methodology suggested that 2.3% - 4.2% of children in the USA were maltreated each year [5]. Every year, there are an estimated 31000 homicide deaths in children under 15 [10]. In Britain, it was estimated that each year at least 1 child per 1000 children under the age of 4 years suffered physical abuse. In Egypt, prevalence of abuse was 36.6%. Emotional, physical, sexual and combined abuse prevalence was 12.3%, 7.6%, 7.0% and 9.7% respectively [11]. In Yemen, population based surveys revealed a wide spread use of corporal punishments and cruelty to children at homes, schools, and juvenile centers, which ranged from 51 - 81% [12].

Children have been abused throughout human history, but only recently has child abuse come to be seen as a major social problem and as a primary cause of personal problems [11]. Child abuse has for a long time been recorded in literature, art and science in many parts of the world. Reports of infanticide, mutilation, abandonment and other forms of violence against children date back to ancient civilizations. The historical records are also filled with reports of unkempt, weak and malnourished children, cast out by families to fend for themselves and of children who have been abused [13]. Children in the Arab Peninsula are subjected to all forms of child abuse and neglect. However, the problem is ignored or may even be tolerated and accepted. So, abused children continue to suffer and most abusers go free, unpunished and untreated. Cases of child abuse represent the "tip of the iceberg" of the real phenomenon, where only a small proportion would be seen "above the surface". There is incomplete and inconsistent information on the prevalence of maltreatment, its socio-demographic risk factors, and its relationship to future health [14].

How prevalent is childhood abuse? Which children are at greatest risk? What are the consequences? Until now there is struggle for answering these basic questions [14]. However, existing local research is not available. The objective of this study was to determine the

prevalence, forms, associated variables and outcome of child abuse, retrospectively reported by students of King Saud university in Riyadh district.

Methodology

Study design

A cross-sectional analytical study carried out by group of medical students and interns of Different Universities, during the educational year 2015 - 2016. It aims to estimate the prevalence and forms of child abuse among a sample of college students at king Saud University in Riyadh city; in order to help the evaluation of this problem.

Study area

The study was carried out among the colleges of King Saud University in Riyadh City, the capital city of Saudi Arabia during the period from 1st March 2016 to 10th November 2016.

Study population

The study population included the students of King Saud University aged (18 - 24) years and who were available in the academic year 2015 - 2016 during the study period.

The list of all targeted groups was obtained from the Department of Admission and Registration of King Saud University and the total number of students in the colleges was 6390 students according to the statistics of 2014 - 2015.

Inclusion criteria for selection of study population:

1. All King Saud university students aged between 18 - 24 years old, young enough to recall their childhood.
2. Saudi nationality.

Sample size estimation:

The sample size was calculated by the following formula:

$$\text{Sample size } (N) = \frac{PQ(Z)^2}{(D)^2}$$

P = proportion of the characteristic in the population (68.3%) [14].

Q = 1 - p (1 - 0.68) = 0.32

D - precision or error allowable. (d= 5%)

Z - confidence level. (95%) taken as 1, 96

$$N = \frac{1.96^2 \times (0.86 \times 0.32)}{0.05^2} = \frac{0.8359}{0.0025} = 334.4$$

So the sample size is (334) students. Then, we added 30% (100 students) as a drop out to the sample size to avoid any missing data among the students during data collection, so the sample size was increased to (434) students.

Sampling Method

The sample was selected by two stages as the following:

First stage

Firstly, we determined the number of colleges in King Saud University in Riyadh city. After excluding colleges outside the city of Riyadh, the number of colleges was 10, they were: (Faculty of Administrative Sciences, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Arts (males), Faculty of Engineering and petroleum, Faculty of Environmental Sciences and Marine Biology, Faculty of Humanities (girls), Faculty of Law, faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Faculty of Nursing).

Secondly, we selected five colleges from the ten colleges of King Saud University in Riyadh city randomly.

Thirdly, we determined the total number of students in the 5 selected colleges.

The selected 5 colleges were:

- College of Medicine and Health Sciences.
- College of Engineering and Petroleum.
- College of Humanities. (girls)
- College of Arts. (males)
- College of Nursing.

Second Stage

Firstly, sample size (434) of students were distributed evenly amongst the chosen five colleges, according to the total number of students in each college. Then in each college the sample was distributed evenly amongst the department, according to the total number of the students in each.

Secondly, selection of the students from different departments in each college based on simple random sampling method.

Percentage of students in each selected college in King Saud University:

$$\frac{\text{Number of student in each selected college}}{\text{Total number of students in all five selected colleges}} \times 100$$

The sample size required in each of the 5 selected colleges in King Saud University:

$$\frac{\text{Percentage of students in each college}}{100} \times \text{Sample size (434)}$$

No.	College name	No. of students in each college	Percentage	Sample size
1	Medicine and Health Sciences	1138	18%	78
2	Engineering and Petroleum	2887	45%	195
3	Humanities (girls)	770	12%	52
4	Arts (males)	1359	21%	91
5	Nursing	236	4%	18
To- tal		6390	100%	434

Table 1: Distribution of sample size among the selected colleges.

Percentage of the students in each department of each college:

$$\frac{\text{Total number of students in each department}}{\text{Total number of students in the selected college}} \times 100$$

The sample size in each department:

$$\frac{\text{Percentage of students in each department}}{100} \times \text{Sample size of college}$$

No.	Department	No. of students in each department	Percentage	Sample size
1	Medicine	858	75.4%	59
2	Pharmacy	175	15.4%	12
3	Laboratories	105	9.2%	7
	Total	1138	100%	78

Table 2: Distribution of sample size in the college of Medicine and Health Sciences.

No.	Department	No. of students in each department	Percentage	Sample size
1	Islamic Studies	141	10.4%	9
2	English Language	263	19.4%	18
3	Arabic Language	190	14.0%	13
4	Geography	205	15.1%	14
5	History	151	11.1%	10
6	Philosophy and sociology	136	10.0%	9
7	Press and Media	200	14.7%	13
8	Libraries management	73	5.4%	5
	Total	1359	100%	91

Table 3: Distribution of sample size in the college of Arts (males).

No.	Department	No. of students in each department	Percentage	Sample size
1	Islamic studies	118	15.3%	8
2	English language	211	27.4%	14
3	Plastic arts	21	2.7%	1
4	Kindergarten	201	26.1%	14
5	Social service	219	28.4%	15
Total		770	100%	52

Table 4: Distribution of sample size in the college of Humanities (girls).

No.	Department	No. of students	Percentage	Sample size
1	Chemical	329	11.4%	22
2	Architecture	460	15.9%	31
3	Computer	246	8.5%	17
4	Petroleum	677	23.5%	46
5	Civilization	669	23.2%	45
6	Electronic	506	17.5%	34
	Total	2887	100%	195

Table 5: Distribution of sample size in the college of Engineering and Petroleum.

No.	Department	No. of students	Percentage	Sample size
1	Nursing	236	100%	18
	Total	236	100%	18

Table 6: Distribution of sample size in the college of Nursing.

Data Collection and Tool

Data was collected by using standardized ISPCAN [16], pre-tested self-administered questionnaire.

The questionnaire was divided into several sections as the following:

Personal data (Name is not included).

- Questions related to different forms of child abuse.
- Questions related to the perpetrator (offender).
- Questions related to outcomes of child abuse. (Because ISPCAN questionnaire did not include questions about outcome, further questions related to outcomes of child abuse were added by the researchers to cover our research objectives. This minimal change will not affect the validity and reliability of the questionnaire as recommended by other studies [14,15].

Questionnaire

The questionnaire developed by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and translated into many languages ISPCAN [16].

The questionnaire inquired about personal and socio-demographic data. Family circumstances such as the existence of psychological illnesses or drug addiction among parents, presence of spouse abuse (one parent hits the other) and parents living apart (divorce, separation, death) were also inquired about.

The Standardized Arabic Version of the Questionnaire (Child Abuse Screening Tool), (the young form) was fulfilled. It is a collaborative multi-country questionnaire which has been developed by the International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN) with assistance of UNICEF and the Oak Foundation. It was reviewed by more than 100 professionals from different countries, translated into many languages including Arabic, and tested for validity and reliability. It is constructed for reporting all forms of violence against children accurately and to measure the true scope of the problem. The young adult form retrospectively inquires about the exposure to any type of child abuse before the age of 18 years [16].

The questionnaire asked about exposure to physical, emotional and sexual abuse. Physical abuse was evidenced by asking each student about the history of being beaten, hit by an object that leaves marks (stick, rope, belt, etc...), kicked, severely shook, burnt, stabbed and slapped. In addition, students were asked about exposure to anyone who dragged their hair (or pinch ear), or put chilli in any part of their body to cause pain. Regarding emotional abuse, each student was asked about the history of being insulted or criticized, hearing that he/she was not loved by anybody, being rejected (someone wished that she or he had never been born or was dead), or being threatened to be abandoned or killed by someone. In regards to sexual abuse, students were asked about incidences of inappropriate sexual behaviors from abusers during childhood, as being fondled (private parts) by an offender, forced to view/or fondle offender's private parts, forced to photograph in nude, and forced into having Sexual intercourse.

If the answer to any of the previous questions (about exposure to physical, emotional and sexual abuse) was yes then the student was asked to indicate the number (frequency) of incidents, the age of exposure, result, and the relation of the offender to student. Only the abused students were asked about the impact of abuse on their life. Poor educational performance, becoming anxious or having nightmares, smoking, drug addiction or having violent behaviors, suicidal thought or attempts, wishing revenge and seeking for a psychotherapy were also addressed.

Pilot study (pre-test)

The pre-testing questionnaire was conducted among 20 students who either volunteered or were randomly selected from different colleges of King Saud University. The sample of students used in this pre-test was not included in this study. The questionnaire was pre-tested to determine the question sequence and the identification of difficult words. During the pre-test a few difficult words in some questions were found and these words were changed into simple local words. Also additional questions were added (related to outcome). The questionnaire was modified according to the results necessity.

Data Analysis

The data was checked for completeness, coded then entered into a computer by using (IBM, SPSS statistics, version 20) software. The data was analyzed by using descriptive statistical tools (frequencies, percentage). Chi square test was used as indicated. P-value was considered significant at level < 0.05 . Then, the study result was presented in tables and graphs.

Ethical Consideration

An Approval of the project was obtained from King Saud University, College of Medicine, department of community medicine. A letter was obtained from College of Medicine to the vice deans of each of the 5 selected faculties to facilitate our data collection. The participants informed about the main purpose of the study, then they were asked for their consent and they have the right not to participate if they did not want to. Before inclusion in the study the participants were sitting separate in the teaching hall and asked whether or not they had experienced any form of child abuse. We assured them that information collected will be used only for scientific and research purposes.

Results

A total of 434 questionnaires were distributed among King Saud University students, and all 434 questionnaires were filled giving a response rate of 100%. However, data was not completed in 24 questionnaires, so, we excluded them (24). Final number of questionnaires included in the study was 410.

Table 7 summarized Personal, Socio-demographic and family circumstances of Students. Male students represented 60% of the sample, the remaining 40% were females. In term of age, the students' age ranged from (18 - 24) years. The majority (61%) of them were in the age group (20 - < 22) and the minority (6.3%) in the age group (18 - < 20). In term of students' residence, of the 410 participants, 64.9% of them were living in urban areas, in comparison to (35.1%) living in rural areas. More than half of students' fathers and mothers did not continue their education to the university level (57.1% and 62.9% respectively). The results also showed that, the most frequent

occupations of students' fathers were private employee (48.8%) and government employee (46.1%), while the majority (86.6%) of students' mothers were housewives. As shown in table 7 the majority of students were living in families with income between 5,000 to 8,000 and more than 8,000 Saudi Riyals. Most of them (62.2%) were living with 2 - 3 persons in one room in their house.

Students' characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex of the student		
Male	246	60
Female	164	40
Age group (in years)		
18 - < 20	26	6.3
20 - < 22	250	61
22 - 24	134	32.7
College name		
Arts (males)	82	20
Humanities (females)	51	12.4
Nursing	17	4.2
Medicine	76	18.5
Engineering	184	44.9
Living place before 18 year-old		
Urban	266	64.9
Rural area	144	35.1
Educational level of father		
University and above	150	36.6
Lower than university	234	57.1
Illiterate	26	6.3
Educational level of mother		
University and above	34	8.3
Lower than university	258	62.9
Illiterate	118	28.8
Father's occupation		
Government employee	189	46.1
Private Employee	200	48.8
Does not work	21	5.1
Mother's occupation		
Government Employee	41	10.0
Private Employee	14	3.4
Housewife	355	86.6
Family income in S/R*		
< 5000	91	22.2
5000 - 8000	147	35.9
> 8000	172	42.0
Crowding index		
One person/room	36	8.8
2-3 persons/room	255	62.2
More than three	119	29.0
Parental relation		
Married	342	83.4
Divorced	21	5.1
One dead	47	11.5
Smoking, using drugs and/or alcohol among adults in the house		
Yes	58	14.1
No	352	85.9
Adults in the house arguing with each other		
Yes	188	45.9
No	222	54.1
Adults in the house who hits, kicks or hurts each other		
Yes	86	21.0
No	324	79.0
Adults in home use guns, knives to hurt or scare someone else inside home		
Yes	44	10.7
No	366	89.3
Total	410	100

Table 7: Personal, Socio-demographic and Family circumstances of King Saud University Students (N = 410).

*S/R = Saudi Riyals

Regarding students’ parental relation; table 7 shows that, more than 80% of them were living with their married parents, and 14.1% of students were living with adults who smoke, used drugs and/or alcohol, while (45.9%) of them were living with adults arguing with each other, (21.0%) of them were living with adults that hits, kicks or hurts each other and (10.7%) of students were living with adults who use guns or knives to hurt or scare another family member.

Table 8, shows that 91% of the students reported experiencing some forms of abuse during childhood, with 83.9% of students recalled being emotionally maltreated, and 74.9% reported being victims of physical abuse. Furthermore 38.5% of students reported exposure to some sexually inappropriate behaviors during childhood. More than one form of abuse or maltreatment was common; (41.0%) recalled two forms, while 32.7% experienced all forms of abuse together.

Patterns of exposure	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Overall Exposure to child abuse	373	91.0
Exposed to 1 form or more:		
one form	71	17.3
Two forms	168	41.0
Three forms	134	32.7
Not exposed	37	9.0
Type of abuse		
Emotional abuse		
1- Exposed	344	83.9
2-History of being		
Screamed or called with bad names	278	80.8
Made victim feel ashamed or embarrassed	242	70.4
Rejected: wished that he/she was never born	71	20.6
Threatened to be abandoned	66	19.2
Threatened to be killed	51	14.8
Physical abuse		
I-Exposed	307	74.9
2-History of being		
Pushed or kicked	207	67.4
Pulled hair or pinched ear	222	72.3
Slapped face	181	59.0
Hit with object (stick, rope, belt)	186	60.6
Shacked or drowned	51	16.6
Burned or scalded (Put chili in any part of body)	38	12.4
Stabbed with knife	12	3.9
Sexual abuse		
I- Exposed	158	38.5
2- History of being		
Spoken in a sexual way by abuser	128	81.0
Forced to look at sexual picture	32	20.3
Forced to view victim’s private parts	42	26.6
Forced to touch abuser’s private parts	33	20.9
Photographed the victim, in the nude	2	1.3
Forced into having sexual intercourse	32	20.3

Table 8: Prevalence of Exposure to Different Forms of Child Abuse (N= 410).

Regarding the forms of emotional abuse, table 8 shows that history of being screamed or called bad names (80.8%), made the victim feel ashamed or embarrassed (70.4%) were the most prevalent types. Moreover, (20.6%), (19.2%) and (14.8%) of students reported being rejected, threatened to be abandoned and to be killed, respectively. Figure 1 shows that about 48.3% of students experienced occurrence of these different events during the period (14 - < 18) years making it the most common reported age group of exposure.

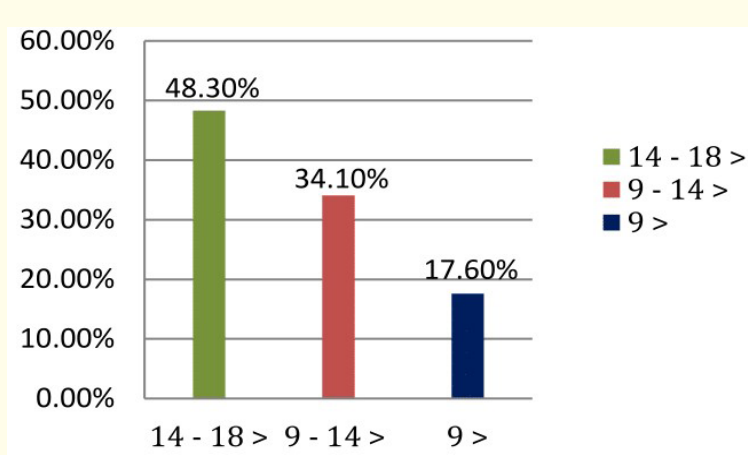


Figure 1: Relation between age group and exposure to emotional child abuse.

Table 8 portrays that physical abuse was the second most common form of abuse 74.9%. Pulled hair or pinched ear, pushed or kicked, hit with object (stick, rope or belt) and slapped face, were the most common types of physical abuse, reported by the majority of students (72.3%), (67.4%), (60.6%) and (59.0%) respectively. In figure 2, The most common age of exposure to physical abuse was (9 - < 14) years reported by 45% of students. Pertaining to sexual abuse 81% of students reported being spoken in sexual way by the abuser. While 26.6%, 20.9% and 20.3% were forced to view, touch abuser’s private parts and were forced into sexually intercourse, respectively. Otherwise, smaller percentages of students reported being photographed as nude 1.3%. Figure 3 shows that the most exposure to this type of child abuse occurred at age group (9 - < 14), (14 - < 18) years, both have similar percentage(43.7%). Only(32.3%) of students who were exposed to sexual abuse told their parents about it, figure 4.

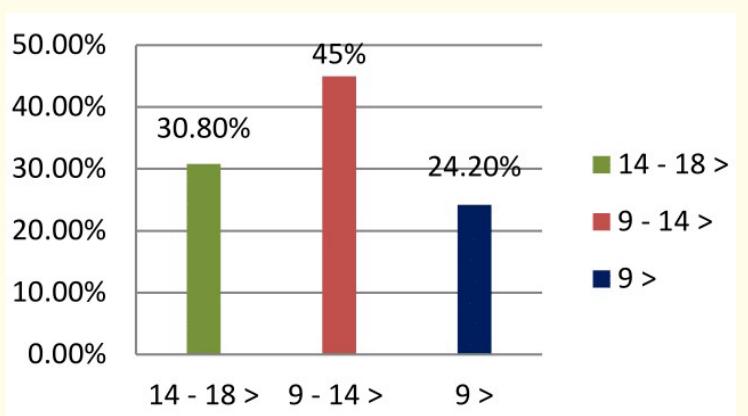


Figure 2: Relation between age group and exposure to physical child abuse.

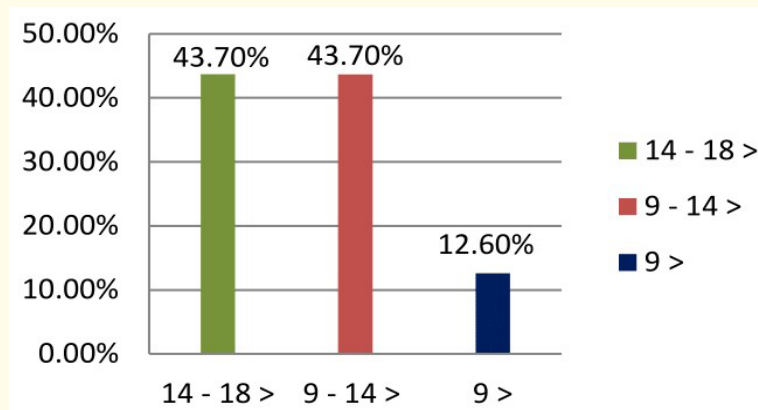


Figure 3: Relation between age group and exposure to sexual abuse.

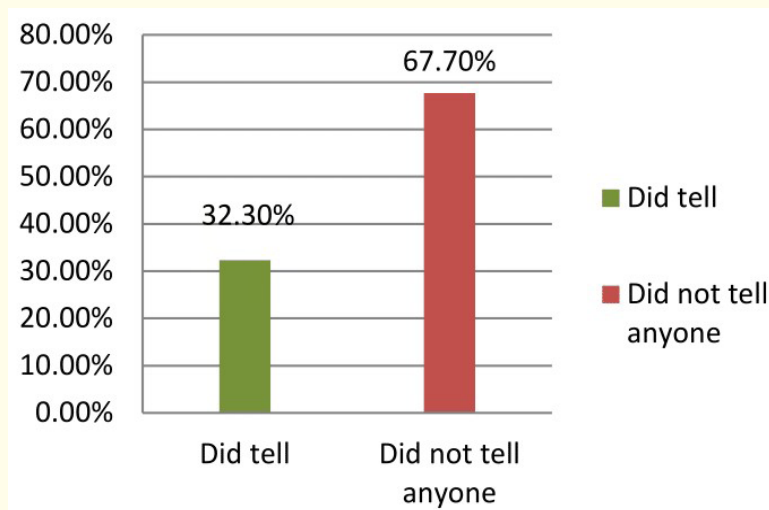


Figure 4: Disclosure of sexual abuse.

Regarding emotional abuse; table 9 reveals that people outside of the students' family were the common perpetrators of emotional abuse, about (44.8% and 36.6%) of the students reported being screamed at, felt shamed by persons outside of their families, respectively. Other identified perpetrators included parents and siblings.

Offenders	Parents N (%)	Siblings N (%)	Relatives N (%)*	Teachers N (%)	Person outside the family N (%)**
Type of abuse					
Emotional abuse: history of being (N = 344)					
Screamed or called with bad names	94 (27.3)	71 (20.6)	64 (18.6)	62 (18)	154 (44.8)
Made abuser feel ashamed	48 (14)	26 (7.6)	63 (18.3)	65 (18.9)	126 (36.6)
Rejected: wished that he/she was never born	20 (5.8)	17 (4.9)	14 (4.1)	5 (1.5)	35 (10.2)
Threatened to be abandoned	19 (5.5)	6 (1.7)	7 (2.0)	1 (.3)	43 (12.5)
Threatened to be killed	7 (2.0)	2 (0.6)	12 (3.5)	0 (0)	35 (10.2)
Physical abuse: history of being (N = 307)					
Pushed or kicked	64 (20.8)	80 (26.1)	33 (10.8)	18 (5.9)	88 (28.7)
Pulled hair or pinched ear	112 (36.5)	61 (20)	44 (14.3)	46 (15)	59 (19.2)
Slapped face	67 (21.8)	47 (15.3)	29 (9.4)	15 (4.9)	60119.5
Hit with object (stick, robe , belt)	123 (40.1)	27 (8.8)	25 (8.1)	40 (13.0)	26 (8.5)
Shacked or drowned	2 (0.7)	12 (3.9)	9 (2.9)	3 (1)	30 (9.8)
Burned or scalded (Put chili in any part of body)	19 (6.2)	4 (1.3)	9 (2.9)	1 (0.3)	13 (4.2)
Stabbed with a knife	0 (0)	2 (0.7)	1 (0.3)	0 (0)	9 (2.9)
Sexual abuse: history of being (N = 158)					
Spoken in a sexual way by abuser	3 (1.9)	3 (1.9)	17 (10.8)	6 (3.8)	111 (70.3)
Forced to look at sexual picture	0 (0)	1 (.6)	4 (2.5)	0 (0)	27 (17.1)
Forced to view abuser’s private parts	0 (0)	1 (.6)	8 (5.1)	0 (0)	33 (20.9)
Forced to touch abuser’s private parts	0 (0)	2 (1.3)	10 (6.3)	1 (0.6)	24 (15.2)
Photographed the abuser in the nude	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (1.3)
Forced into having sexual intercourse	0 (0)	2 (1.3)	12 (7.6)	1 (0.6)	20 (12.7)

Table 9: Reported Offenders of Different Forms of Child Abuse.

*Relatives: Uncles, aunts, cousins, step fathers (mothers), grandfathers (mothers)

**Person outside the family: Friends, or neighbors, drivers and strangers, etc.

On the other hand, parents were common perpetrators of physical abuse; table 9 shows that the majority of the students who were exposed to physical abuse, e.g. hit with object (stick, rope or belt), pulled hair or pinched ear (40.1% and 36.5%) respectively, were by their parents.

Regarding sexual abuse, (70.3% and 26.58%) students reported being spoken in a sexual way and forced to view victim’s private parts, respectively, by individuals outside their families; making them the common perpetrators of sexual abuse. Furthermore, the majority of offenders who forced the student into having sex were persons outside their families (12.7%) and other relatives (7.6%) in table 9.

Table 10 illustrates the association between child abuse and students’ socio- demographic and Family Circumstances. As shown in table 10, results of Chi-square test revealed that all students’ socio-demographic characteristics were not significantly associated with child abuse. There was a statistically significant association only between child abuse and students’ family circumstances. It was found that existence of parents or adults in home arguing with each other and parents or adults in home who hit one another has a statistically significant association with reoccurrence of child abuse (p. value < 0.000 and 0.004 respectively).

Socio-Demographics Characteristics and Family circumstances	Exposure to abuse		Test value X ² value	P value*
	Yes N = 373 (91.0%)	NO N=37 (9.0%)		
Sex				
Male	227 (92.3)	19 (7.7)	1.268	0.260
Female	146 (89.0)	18 (11)		
Crowding index				
1-3 persons	263 (90.4)	28 (9.6)	0.436	0.509
3 persons	110 (92.4)	9 (7.9)		
Family income				
< 8000	216 (90.8)	22 (9.2)	0.033	0.855
> 8000	157 (91.3)	15 (8.7)		
Place of living before 18 years old				
Urban	243 (91.4)	23 (8.6)	0.132	0.717
Rural	130 (90.3)	14 (9.9)		
Father's educational level				
Educated	348 (90.6)	36 (9.4)	0.907	0.341
Non-educated	25 (96.2)	1 (3.8)		
Mother's educational level				
Educated	263 (90.1)	29 (9.9)	1.017	0.313
Non-educated	110 (93.2)	8 (6.8)		
Father's occupation				
Employee	355 (91.0)	35 (9.0)	0.024	0.876
Does not work	18 (90.0)	2 (10.0)		
Mother's occupation				
Employee	52 (92.9)	4 (7.1)	0.280	0.597
Does not work	321 (90.7)	33 (9.3)		
Parents' relation				
Live together	300 (90.9)	30 (9.1)	0.157	0.692
DO not live together or one dead	61 (92.4)	5 (7.6)		
Adults in home smoking, using drugs and/or alcohol				
Yes	56 (96.6)	2 (3.4)	2.559	0.079
No	317 (90.1)	35 (9.9)		
Adults in home arguing with each other				
Yes	183 (97.3)	5 (2.7)	17.132	0.000
No	19 (85.6)	32 (14.4)		
Adults in home hits, kicks or hurts each other				
Yes	85 (98.8)	1 (1.2)	8.192	0.004
No	288 (88.9)	36 (11.1)		
Adults in home use guns knives to hurt or scare someone else inside the family				
Yes	43 (97.7)	1 (2.3)	2.737	0.098
No	330 (90.2)	36 (9.8)		

Table 10: Association Between Exposure of Students to emotional abuse and the Resulting Outcomes.

Table 11 illustrates the association between emotional abuse and the outcomes reported by the students. As shown in table 11, results of Chi-square test revealed that most outcomes were significantly associated with emotional abuse. There was a statistically significant association between emotional abuse and poor education, become violent, anxiousness and nightmares, pain of unknown origin, fear of other sex, suicidal thought or attempts, wishing revenge, use drugs and seeking psychotherapy (P-value < 0.05).

Outcomes	Exposure		No exposure		Total		Test value X ² value	P-value*
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Poor educational performance								
Yes	145	89.5%	17	10.5%	162	100%	6.277	.013
No	199	80.2%	49	19.8%	248	100%		
Become violent								
Yes	110	93.2%	8	6.8%	118	100%	10.651	.001
No	234	80.1	58	19.9%	292	100%		
Anxiousness and nightmares								
Yes	226	90.0%	25	10.0%	251	100%	18.051	.000
No	118	74.2%	41	25.8%	159	100%		
Pain of unknown origin								
Yes	167	87.9%	23	12.1%	190	100%	4.179	.041
No	177	80.5%	43	19.5%	220	100%		
Fear of other sex								
Yes	57	95.0%	3	5.0%	60	100%	6.409	.011
No	287	82.0%	63	18.0%	63	100%		
Suicidal thought or attempts								
Yes	36	97.3%	1	2.7%	37	100%	5.403	.020
No	308	82.6%	65	17.4%	373	100%		
Wishing revenge								
Yes	109	94.8%	6	5.2%	115	100%	14.009	.000
No	235	79.7%	60	20.3%	295	100%		
Use drugs such as painkillers or antidepressant								
Yes	25	100%	0	0.0%	25	100%	5.108	.024
No	319	82.9%	66	17.1%	385	100%		
Resorted to smoking								
Yes	25	96.2%	1	3.8%	26	100%	3.085	.079
No	319	83.1%	65	16.9%	348	100%		
Thought to go to psychiatrist								
Yes	94	97.9%	2	2.1%	96	100%	18.228	.000
No	250	79.6%	64	20.4%	314	100%		

Table 11: Association Between Exposure of Students to emotional abuse and the Resulting Outcomes.

As shown in table 12 it was found that, physical abuse has a statistically significant associated with poor educational performance, becoming violent, anxiousness and nightmares, fear of other sex, and seeking psychotherapy as outcomes; supported by (p-value < 0.05).

Outcomes	Exposure		Non-exposure		Total		Test value X ² value	P-value*
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Poor educational performance								
Yes	134	82.7%	28	17.3%	162	100%	8.747	.003
No	173	69.8%	75	30.2%	248	100%		
Become violent								
Yes	103	87.3%	15	12.7%	118	100%	13.565	.000
No	204	69.9%	88	30.1%	292	100%		
Anxiousness and nightmares								
Yes	200	79.7%	51	20.3%	251	100%	7.938	.005
No	107	67.3%	52	32.7%	159	100%		
Pain of unknown origin								
Yes	151	79.5%	39	20.5%	190	100%	3.976	.046
No	156	70.9%	64	29.1%	220	100%		
Fear of other sex								
Yes	52	86.7%	8	13.3%	60	100%	5.193	.023
No	255	72.9%	95	27.1%	350	100%		
Suicidal thought or attempts								
Yes	33	89.2%	4	10.8%	37	100%	4.428	.035
No	274	73.5%	99	26.5%	373	100%		
Wishing revenge								
Yes	93	80.9%	22	19.1%	115	100%	3.050	.081
No	214	72.5%	81	27.5%	295	100%		
Use drugs such as painkillers or antidepressant								
Yes	17	68.0%	8	32.0%	25	100%	0.670	.413
No	290	75.3%	95	24.7%	385	100%		
Resorted to smoking							1.399	
Yes	22	84.6%	4	15.4%	26	100%		.237
No	285	74.2%	99	25.4%	384	100%		
Thought to go to psychiatrist								
Yes	85	88.5%	11	11.5%	96	100%	12.441	.000
No	222	70.7%	92	29.3%	314	100%		

Table 12: Association Between Exposure of Students to physical abuse and the Resulting outcomes.

*Chi-square test (P < 0.05 is considered statistical significance)

Regarding sexual abuse, the outcomes with statistically significant association were; poor educational performance, becoming violent, pain of unknown origin, fear of other sex, suicidal thought or attempts, wishing revenge and seeking psychotherapy, table 13.

Outcomes	Exposure		No exposure		Total		Test value X ² value	P-value*
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Poor educational performance								
Yes	75	46.3%	87	53.7%	162	100%	6.808	.009
No	83	33.5%	165	66.5%	248	100%		
Become violent								
Yes	66	55.9%	52	44.1%	118	100%	21.168	.000
No	92	31.5%	200	68.5%	292	100%		
Anxiousness and nightmares								
Yes	106	42.2%	145	57.8%	251	100%	3.730	.053
No	52	32.7%	107	67.35	159	100%		
Pain of unknown origin								
Yes	88	46.3%	102	53.7%	190	100%	9.047	.003
No	70	31.8%	150	68.2%	220	100%		
Fear of other sex								
Yes	40	66.7%	20	33.3%	60	100%	23.481	.000
No	118	33.7%	232	66.3%	350	100%		
Suicidal thought or attempts								
Yes	24	64.9%	13	35.1%	37	100%	11.902	.001
No	134	35.9%	239	64.1%	373	100%		
Wishing revenge								
Yes	58	50.4%	57	49.6%	115	100%	9.553	.002
No	100	33.9%	195	66.1%	295	100%		
Use drugs such as painkillers or antidepressant								
Yes	12	48.0%	13	52.0%	25	100%	1.007	.316
No	146	37.9%	239	62.1%	385	100%		
Resorted to smoking								
Yes	13	50.0%	13	50.0%	26	100%	1.540	.215
No	145	37.8%	239	62.2%	384	100%		
Thought to go to psychiatrist								
Yes	50	52.1%	46	47.9%	96	100%	9.712	.002
No	108	34.4%	206	65.6%	314	100%		

Table 13: Association Between Exposure of Students to sexual abuse and the Resulting Outcomes.

*Chi-square test (P < 0.05 is considered statistical significance)

Discussion

Overall, abuse is widely prevalent among King Saud university students in Riyadh City. The current study reported high rate of childhood victimization. 91% of participants were exposed to some forms of maltreatment and 32.7% reported experiencing emotional, physical and sexual abuse together at the same time. These results are higher than a results reported by another KSA study, in which the overall rate was (70.7%) [17]. Another study conducted in Jeddah city, Saudi Arabia, found that (68.3%) of participants had a child abuse [14]. Lower rates of child abuse (36.6%) was reported by a study conducted in Egypt [11], and by a study conducted in Erbil, Iraq, with a rate of abuse around (20%) [5]. We can see all abuse rates reported by Saudi studies are high compared to other rates, these differences may be due to socio-economic variations.

Results of the current study showed that the emotional abuse is the most prevalent type of maltreatment. Similar to other studies conducted among students in KSA [14] and among students in Egypt [11]. Study in Southern California reported that the sexual abuse is the most common form [20]. Another study in Jordan separated the verbal abuse from the emotional abuse and reported that the verbal abuse is the common form [21]. These dissimilarities may be due to cultural and moral differences and due to the separation of verbal abuse in the Jordanian study.

Emotional abuse was found to be the most prevalent type of abuse in current study, around (83.9%) of students reported being exposed to emotional abuse, another KSA study reported a rate of (50.6%) [14]. On the other hand there was slightly lower rate (49.08%) reported from India [18] and (47.3%) reported from China [23]. The lower rate reported from China, may be due to their shorter recall period (only for one year preceding the study). A very low rate of emotional abuse was reported from Jordan (4.7%) [21]. This low rate may be due to the separation of the verbal abuse from the emotional abuse. About 48.3% of students experienced emotional abuse during the age of 14 - < 18 years, making it the most common age group of exposure to Emotional abuse. While result of other Saudi study said that about one third of students reported being exposed to different varieties of emotional abuse during more than one period of their childhood [14].

Results of the current study showed that about (74.9%) of students had been victims of physical abuse. A study from Hong Kong reported a rate of (52%) [22]. Another rate (47.3%) was reported by a young adult girls from India [18]. On the other hand, low rates of (2.1%) and (7.6%) were reported by studies conducted in Jordan [21], and Egypt [11] respectively. This disagreement may be due to differences in socioeconomic levels. The most common age group of exposure to physical abuse was 9 - < 14 years reported by 45.0% of students. Other KSA study found that the common age of exposure to physical abuse was 8 - < 10 years, and the highest percentage (32.2%) of exposure to burn occurred during the age 4 - < 8 years [14].

Results of the present study showed that (38.5%) of students reported incidents of sexual abuse during their childhood, which is similar to a rate (32.3%) reported from a study conducted in Los Angeles [20]. On the other hand, low rates of (7.0%) and (0.5%) reported from Egypt [11] and Jordan [21] respectively. These dissimilarities may be due to cultural and moral differences. The most common periods of exposure to this type of child abuse were (10 - < 14) and (14 - < 18) both with a percentage of (43.7%). On the other hand, the other Saudi study reported that the common periods of exposure were (4 - < 8) and (8 - < 10 years) [14].

The common variety of emotional abuse in our study was (screamed or called with bad names) with a rate of (83.9%), and the lowest variety was (threatened to be killed) with a rate of (14.8%). The highest variety of emotional abuse in other KSA studies was (being insulted or exposed to criticism) (44.5%) [16] and the lowest was (threatened to be killed) [14].

The common variety of physical abuse in our study was (being pushed or kicked) with a rate of (67.4%), which is similar to the rate reported from the Indian study (63.67%) [18]. On the other hand, the lowest variety in our study was (stabbed with knife) with a rate of (3.9%), which is similar to the rate reported from KSA study (2.2%) [14].

The common variety of sexual abuse in our study was (being spoken in a sexual way by abuser) with a rate of (81%). A study conducted in Egypt showed that (kissing and hugging in a disturbing way against his/her will) was the most common variety of sexual abuse (20.9%) [19]. The lowest variety in our study was (being forced into having sexual intercourse) with a rate of (20.3%), which is much higher than the rate reported by Saudi study (2.9%) [14].

Regarding disclosure of sexual abuse, we found that only (32.3%) of the students who exposed to sexual abuse had told someone (parents, siblings, friends... etc.) about it. In USA study the evidence indicates that the majority of abused children don't revealed abuse during childhood [24].

Emotional abuse was recorded more among the students; the extra familial persons were the common perpetrator in present study. While in the KSA study [14] the common perpetrator was the parents. The parents have the primary responsibility of protecting their chil-

dren. However, the current study portrays that parents were the main offenders of physical abuse, which is similar to results from studies in the KSA [14] and Indian [18]. The child sexual abuse is considered one of the greatest threats to a child's wellbeing and safety. The present study showed the extra familial persons were common perpetrator, which agrees with the results from Egyptian study showed that the neighbors were the common preparatory [19].

Regarding association between child abuse and socio-demographic and familial conditions, the results of the present study revealed that there was a statistically significant association only between child abuse and students' family conditions. This was emphasized by other studies [14,25,26] that demonstrated the child abuse was correlated to some socio-demographic and living conditions. It is clear from the current work that existence of parents or adults at home hit or arguing with each other was the first predictor for almost all types of child abuse, including emotional abuse. Which agree with result from KSA [14]. Another study from China showed also that paternal marital status and family atmosphere were the risk factors of emotional abuse [20]. The current study showed that there is no association between parents' educational level and child abuse, in contrast to other studies from USA [26], China [20] and Egypt [27].

Regarding the outcome, it is obvious from the current study that many types of child maltreatment were associated with poor educational performance, become violent, pain (of unknown origin), and seeking psychotherapy. Concerning with poor educational performance, this was emphasized by other studies in Carolina [31], KSA [14], Iran [25] and Palestine [32]. The present work illustrated that students exposed to physical abuse were more susceptible to having pain(of unknown origin) which agrees with results from USA [25]. The current study revealed that student exposed to sexual abuse were most likely to have suicidal thought and, fear of other sex, whereas other study in Los Angeles, CA, USA reported by students revealed that childhood sexual abuse is a significant risk factor for a range of psychological symptoms in the general population [20]. Other study in China observed that those who had childhood sexual contact reported higher levels of psychological distress than those who had no such contact [29]. The current study well as others, illustrated that one of the outcomes of child abuse was acquiring a violent behavior [30]. Lastly, the present study showed that students exposed to emotional abuse more susceptible to become more violent and anxious as well as nightmares, this coincide the study in KSA which revealed that they were more liable to become anxious or nightmares [14].

Conclusion and Recommendations

The results of this study, provide the prevalence of child abuse among King Saud University students. It is obvious, that child abuse is a significant public health problem among the study population; about ninety-one percent of the students reported exposure to some form of child abuse. Both emotional and physical abuse are the most prevailing types. Persons outside of family (strangers) are the main offenders in both emotional and sexual abuse, while the majority of perpetrators in physical abuse are the parents. Child abuse associated with students' family circumstances such as existence of parents or adults in home arguing on each other, and parents or adults in home who hit one another. Child abuse has long-term negative impacts as low educational performance, increasing anxiousness, becoming more suicidal prone, having symptomatic pain of unknown cause, fear of other sex, acquiring violent behavior and wishing revenge of abusers.

Based on the findings obtained in this study, we would suggest applying this study in different community levels in collaboration with the governmental and non-governmental competent authorities to diminish the upward inclination of this problem. Furthermore, the studies should be published widely as a way to follow the progression or regression which will set the record straight. A policy of extended programs, in community education upon this problem focusing primarily toward the families, recent and future couples on child-rearing. In addition to infliction of sanctions toward the offenders of abuse. We recommend the establishment of rehabilitation centers for the victims of child abuse, provide the proper psychological treatment for victims and finally more awareness around child abuse to enable all to recognize signs/symptoms of abuse and respond appropriately to them.

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