

# Relationship between Attitudes to Child Nursing College Students Perceived Punishment, Child Abuse Awareness and Knowledge

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## Abstract

**Background/Objectives:** This study was conducted to present the basic data for developing education programs for nursing students through correlation research between the awareness and knowledge of child abuse and the attitude toward child corporal punishment for nursing students, and to contribute to the development of customized education programs by grade.

**Methods/Statistical analysis:** The subjects of this study were 200 nursing students in first and second grade of a university located in D city. Data collection was conducted from Oct 1 to Oct 30, 2018. With the collected data, using SPSS Program.

**Findings:** As a result, the awareness of child abuse had a statistically significant difference in grade, completion of child abuse prevention education, and completion of education related to child abuse after entrance.

**Improvements/Applications:** In conclusion, in order to increase the awareness and knowledge of child abuse of nursing students and to cultivate their attitude toward child corporal punishment which is unallowable, it is thought that the indirect experience through the curriculum and non-curriculum of child nursing science of department of nursing will be helpful.

**Keywords:** *Child Abuse, Awareness, knowledge, Nursing Students, Child Corporal Punishment*

## Introduction

Child abuse has often occurred at home under the name of discipline from long ago. Especially in Korea, as the tendency of thinking highly of the value of a family and parents is strong due to the influence of Confucian culture, corporal punishment has been widely found at home, and educational scenes with a permissive attitude as discipline. However, since child abuse negatively affects the physical, emotional, and social development and adaptation of children and adolescents, and can have a negative effect on the growth and development of them as a crime which can lead to various after-effects up to adulthood in the long run, the attention of people who

are around is necessary to find the abuse early<sup>[1]</sup>. while the number of cases of child abuse increases and the severity of its symptoms has been revealed, the children who are victims don't protect themselves, and do not express the abused situation or ask for help because they don't have an ability to solve the problem by judging the situation on their own. On the other hand, perpetrators don't report their mistakes themselves, so child abuse is easily concealed if someone who is a third person doesn't inform the world of it with responsibility<sup>[4]</sup>. Therefore, in order to find and treat the abused children as well as to prevent child abuse, it must be preceded to know what abuse is and to perceive its dangers<sup>[5]</sup>. In the developed countries, nurses are legally designated as a mandated reporter to play an important role in selecting and preventing child abuse, and are requested to have a heavier sense of responsibility as experts<sup>[6]</sup>. The reason why mandated reporters are designated by a law like

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this is that it is more important to find and report child abuse early than any other thing. However, in Korea, the number of child abuse reported by mandated reporters accounted for only 32%(8,288) of the total number of reported cases in 2016(25,878). It's a very low figure compared to the cases that child abuse is reported by non-mandated reporters(68% of all child abuse report rate)<sup>[7]</sup>. It is reported that the disturbance factors that hinder the reports of child abuse are a lack of knowledge of the symptoms and signs of abuse, report procedure, and legal process<sup>[2,3]</sup>, the attitude that child abuse is not serious enough to report, and that it will not be helpful even to report<sup>[4, 5]</sup>, and a thought that the report may have a negative effect on parents and children, and that rearing can't be interfered as it is parents' right<sup>[5,6]</sup>. A nurse is in a position to observe the interaction between children and parents, to provide child care, and to play an important role in reporting, mediating and preventing child abuse when finding child abuse. This early involvement of nurses may be the basis for providing information and support for child rearing to parents who have difficulty in forming the attachment to the child in a preventive way or to pregnant women who are relatively at risk of child abuse. Nursing students as well as nurses should be the subjects of systematic education of child abuse as well. Nursing students will be the first to encounter children in various environments such as hospitals and community health centers after graduating from the university, and perform a role which quickly finds and takes care of abused children. If nursing students who will perform these roles are to be educated and acquainted with the exact definition of child abuse, the selection of abused child and how to report it, it is thought that the sensitivity and knowledge of child abuse of nurses can be improved in the long run, which will be a future-oriented strategy for reducing the rate of child abuse occurrence. Thus, it is thought that it is important to establish a correct attitude by grasping the awareness and knowledge of child abuse of nursing students, and by identifying their attitude toward corporal punishment. However, it was investigated that nursing students didn't know much about the law though they had an interest in child abuse, and that they had very little experience in education or training<sup>[8]</sup>. Therefore, this study was conducted to present the basic data for

developing education programs for nursing students through correlation research between the awareness and knowledge of child abuse and the attitude toward child corporal punishment for nursing students, the future caregivers or prospective mandated reporters, and to contribute to the development of customized education programs by grade.

## Method

For this study, data from 200 nursing students at K university in Daejeon Metropolitan City was collected, and 193 questionnaires excluding 7 ones whose response was insufficient were finally analyzed.

Data was collected from Oct 1, 2018 to Oct 30, 2018. As for the method of data collection, the researcher visited subjects, explained the purpose and method of the study, distributed a questionnaire to those who agreed to participate in it, and after explaining precautions and how to respond, data collection was conducted. Before collecting data, according to research ethics, the purpose of the study, personal confidentiality, and that it will not be used for purposes other than research were explained to the subjects. Those who agreed on it participated in the survey.

With collected data, using SPSS Program, the general characteristics of the subjects were analyzed with real number and percentage, The knowledge and awareness of child abuse of nursing students and their attitude toward child corporal punishment were done with mean and standard deviation, the relationship between the knowledge and awareness of child abuse of nursing students and their attitude toward child corporal punishment was done with Pearson's correlation coefficient and the difference in the awareness and knowledge of child abuse of nursing students and their attitude toward child corporal punishment was done with ANOVA.

## Results and Discussion

### 1. General Characteristics of Subjects

Characteristics of Subjects are shown in [Table 1].

**Table 1. General Characteristics of Subjects N=200**

Variables	Categories	No(%)
Gender	Male	27(13.5)
	Female	173(86.5)
Grade	1st grade	50(25.0)
	2nd grade	50(25.0)
	3rd grade	50(25.0)
	4th grade	50(25.0)
Completion of child abuse prevention education	Yes	90(45.0)
	No	110(55.0)
Completion of child abuse related education after entrance	Yes	149(74.5)
	No	51(25.5)

## 2. Degree of The Awareness and Knowledge of Child Abuse of Nursing Students and Their Attitude Toward Child Corporal Punishment

It was revealed that the awareness of child abuse of nursing students was average rating 3.04 points out of 4, the knowledge of child abuse was average rating 6.8 points out of 17, and the attitude toward child corporal punishment was average rating 2.37 points out of 6.

## 3. Relationship Between The Awareness and Knowledge of Child Abuse of Nursing Students

and Their Attitude Toward Child Corporal Punishment

The relationship between child abuse awareness, knowledge, and attitudes toward child punishment is shown in [Table 2].

**Table 2. Relationship between variables**

Variables	Awareness of Child Abuse	Knowledge of Child Abuse r(p)	Attitude Toward Child Corporal Punishment r(p)
Awareness of Child Abuse	1		
Knowledge of Child Abuse r(p)	.190**	1	
Attitude Toward Child Corporal Punishment	-.237**	-.161**	1

\*p<.05 \*\*p<.01

**4. Difference in The Awareness and Knowledge of Child Abuse, and the Attitude toward Child Corporal Punishment According to General Characteristics.**

As a result of examining the difference in the awareness and knowledge of child abuse and the attitude

toward child corporal punishment according to general characteristics of the subjects, the awareness of child abuse showed a statistically significant difference in grade, the completion of child abuse prevention education, and the completion of education related to child abuse, the knowledge of child abuse did so in gender, and the attitude toward child corporal punishment did so in grade and the completion of child corporal punishment prevention education [Table 3].

**Table 3. Difference according to general characteristics**

**N=200**

Variables	Categories	Awareness of Child Abuse		Knowledge of Child Abuse		Attitude Toward Child Corporal Punishment	
		Mean ±SD	t or F(p)	Mean ±SD	t or F(p)	Mean ±SD	t or F(p)
Gender	Male	2.94±0.40	1.712 (.192)	0.33±0.17	3.976 (.048)	2.66±0.73	3.765 (.054)
	Female	3.06±0.43		0.41±0.20		2.33±0.84	
Grade	1 a	2.82±0.49	7.737 (.000) a < c,d	0.43±0.29	1.102 (.349)	2.42±0.90	4.367 (.005) b > c
	2 b	3.03±0.35		0.38±0.16		2.59±0.75	
	3 c	3.12±0.40		0.41±0.13		2.03±0.75	
	4c	3.19±0.36		0.37±0.15		2.46±0.83	
Completion of Child Abuse Prevention Education	Yes	3.12±0.42	5.965 (.015)	0.42±0.21	1.654 (.200)	2.24±0.82	4.314 (.039)
	No	2.97±0.42		0.38±0.18		2.48±0.82	
Completion of Education related to Child Abuse after Entrance	Yes	3.13±0.38	30.913 (.000)	0.40±0.18	0.020 (.887)	2.34±0.85	1.263 (.263)
	No	2.78±0.44		0.40±0.23		2.49±0.76	

## Discussion

### Main results are discussed as follows.

First, the awareness of child abuse of nursing students was above average with average rating of 3.04 out of 4. It was similar to the result(3.02) of Jo Yu Hyang and Jeong Yeong Hae's study<sup>[8]</sup> for nursing students. It can be said that the result of this study appeared because the subjects of nursing department of K university took lessons on child abuse through a subject of child nursing science due to the characteristics of department of nursing, and experienced the campaign activities for preventing child abuse through club activities. The knowledge of child abuse of nursing students was 6.8 out of 17. This result is difficult to make a direct comparison with the preceding studies, as there are none which have measured the knowledge of child abuse for nursing students. However, As nurses who act in all areas of clinic often encounter the children and adolescents who suffer from the physical, sexual abuse, they need to be more interested in it. Therefore, it can be said that it is very meaningful and important to educate them so that they may acquire the right knowledge of child abuse, maintain their interest in child abuse, and conduct prevention, discovery, and case management, The attitude toward child corporal punishment of nursing students was low(average rating of 2.37 points out of 6). It is thought that this result supports the result of study of Jo Kyeong Mi and Kim Un Ju<sup>[10]</sup>. that nursing students had a low degree of tolerance for the corporal punishment, and that it is a positive result, as that the degree of tolerance for child corporal punishment is low can be a factor to increase the intention of report of child abuse. The scope of tolerance for the corporal punishment in the process of child rearing is different between nations and cultures, and Chinese students are less critical on the rough, authoritative behaviors, and physical punishment of parents<sup>[11,12,13]</sup>. However, like the result of this study, in the study of Feng and Levine<sup>[5]</sup>, Taiwanese nurses showed a low degree of tolerance for child corporal punishment, which reveals that it is a cultural change within a young generation due to the introduction of western culture and the economic development. That is, considering the study that the professional education and the cultural difference have an important effect on the intention of report of child abuse more than the gender, age, and the socio-economic status of nurses<sup>[14]</sup>, that the tolerance for the corporal punishment gets lowered is a positive change in enhancing the intention of report of nurses.

Second, the awareness of child abuse of nursing students showed a positive correlation with the knowledge of child abuse, but a negative correlation with the attitude toward child corporal punishment. As there are no results of preceding researches, the results of this study are difficult to compare with them directly. Actually, only 35.3% of the respondents who had an experience of finding the child abuse reported it. The reporters had an attitude that they didn't allow it, had more knowledge of child abuse, and had more experience of having access to education and knowledge of child abuse<sup>[15]</sup>. The report rate of child abuse of nurses is low, which reveals that it is an important nursing process to find and report child abuse cases, however, the level of knowledge of child abuse, preparation for it, and confidence in reporting methods and how to utilize available resource are very low<sup>[16]</sup>. That is, it is thought that it is necessary to develop programs to cultivate the unacceptable attitude toward and right knowledge of the corporal punishment for nurses and preliminary nursing students.

Third, the awareness of child abuse had a statistically significant difference in grade, completion of child abuse prevention education, and completion of education related to child abuse after entrance. It can be said that this result appeared because the subjects of this study learned the concept of child abuse in child nursing science and had an indirect experience of child abuse prevention campaign activities through tasks. The knowledge of child abuse showed a statistically significant difference in gender, which is thought because the subjects of study are mainly composed of girl students as nursing students, and it is considered that more in-depth researches are necessary. The attitude toward child corporal punishment showed a statistically significant difference in grade and the completion of child abuse prevention education. In Korea, due to the influence of Confucian culture, corporal punishment has been widely done in a family, and educational scenes with an allowable attitude as discipline because the tendency of thinking highly of the value of a family and parents is strong, however, it is thought it is a result of the cultural change within a young generation due to the introduction of western culture and economic development, and that it is the influence of the process which is handled in child nursing science such as growth development and child abuse as nursing students go up in grade.

## Conclusion

In order to increase the understanding and sensitivity of child abuse, not only have to raise the awareness of child abuse by systematically educating and promoting the standardized contents, but also through proper parenting attitude. Eradication of the abuse is urgent. In addition, the number of trainings as well as educational experiences related to child abuse can increase the reporting intention affecting abuse reporting behavior. There is a need to develop educational programs that reflect the educational needs of college students and to prevent child abuse education programs that apply various teaching methods.

**Ethical Clearance:** Not required

**Source of Funding:** Self

**Conflict of Interest:** Nil

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