

A Study on the Recognition of Child Abuse and Countermeasures

Shinhong Min

Professor, Baekseok University, Department of Nursing, Korea

Abstract

Background/Objectives: With the recent emergence of child abuse as a social issue, national responsibility, not a family problem, is being emphasized. Child abuse is taking place in a private space of family. Abuse by biological parents is occurring continuously.

Method/Statistical Analysis: This study conducted a survey of 300 children's mother with elementary school students living in area C. Recognition of child abuse by type and awareness of how to deal with child abuse were investigated.

Findings: As a result, awareness of the seriousness of the occurrence of child abuse was high. However, parents' experience of finding abused children appeared relatively low. This is a result of parents' inability to clearly distinguish child abuse and a lack of information about it.

Improvements/Applications: Therefore, it is necessary to establish clear criteria for child abuse and provide correct knowledge through regular parental education and promotion. In addition, practical measures such as legal sanctions are needed to deal with child abuse cases.

Keywords: *Attitude, Child abuse, Countermeasure, Mother of a school-age child, Recognition.*

Introduction

Child abuse is a criminal act that negatively affects the physical, emotional, and social development of children and causes many problems. Therefore, not only is prevention of child abuse important, but it also needs to be made efforts to find the abuse before it gets worse. The nation has long taken it for granted that parents have the right to discipline and discipline children in a patriarchal large family culture. Childhood should not be ignored or abused just because it is a child, nor should abuse be justified just because it is a parent^[1]. However, compared to advanced countries, social awareness of the problem of child abuse in households was relatively low. It wasn't until recently that child abuse emerged

as a serious problem that related laws and systems were reorganized^[2]. The definition of child abuse varies. Child abuse is a comprehensive term that includes all forms of child abuse and neglect, generally meaning deliberate acts of delegation and neglect^[3]. This extends to not only physical abuse but also emotional, sexual and neglect. In our country, 7 of Article 3 of the Child Welfare Act, "Child abuse refers to adults, including caregivers, committing physical, mental and sexual violence or abuse that could harm the child's health or well-being, or hinder normal development, and child caregivers abandoning or neglect the child," which includes passive neglect as well as active abuse.

Physical abuse refers to the deliberate or accidental physical injury to a child. Objectively obvious traumatic bodily injury means that a child is subjected to severe or severe beating, unprovoked beating, and repeated beatings^[4]. Emotional abuse does not directly inflict physical damage on children, but it refers to the damage to a child's sense of self-respect by parents ignoring or hating them and discriminating against or verbally abusing other siblings. Sexual abuse refers to forcing

Corresponding Author:

Shinhong Min

Professor, Baekseok University, Department of Nursing, Korea

e-mail: shmin@bu.ac.kr

an immature child to damage a sexual body part or requiring a child to come into contact with a sexual body part, which he or she has been forced to do^[5].

Obligation refers to any act that can hinder the normal development of a child by the caregiver's deliberate and repeated neglect of child care and protection to the type of neglect is distinguished by physical neglect, educational neglect, medical neglect, emotional neglect, and sexual neglect. Physical neglect includes not providing basic shelter, not protecting children from injury and danger, and leaving the child in a dirty environment or in dangerous condition. Educational neglect includes the act of allowing child absenteeism, not caring for school supplies, and neglecting special educational needs. Medical neglect includes not taking the necessary medical treatment for children and not vaccinating children who need vaccinations. Emotional neglect refers to the inability of parents or dependent children to be encouraged to develop growth because they are not interested in or very interested in children. It can be said that children do not talk, or show affection by stroking or touching. Emotional neglect arises from parents' lack of affection or neglect. Sexual neglect means the same state of letting a child be exposed to sexual assault or sexual exploitation^[2].

In recent years, various types and ranges of abuse have occurred in Korea, ranging from simple physical abuse to serious overlapping abuse, and the number of cases of abuse has also been on the rise. The number of cases of child abuse reported in Korea increased by more than 16 times from 2,105 in 2001 to 34,169 in 2017. According to the 2017 National Child Abuse Status Report, overlapping cases accounted for 10,875 cases (48.6%), followed by 4,728 cases of emotional abuse, 2,728 cases (21.1%), physical abuse, 3,285 cases (14.7%), neglect (22.5%) and sexual abuse 692 cases (3.1%). In particular, 76.8% of the perpetrators of child abuse cases that occurred in 2017 were biological parents, while 80.4% of the abuse locations were homes^[6].

The serious reason for this problem is that the victim is physically and mentally immature and abused by a trusted and dependent guardian of a young child who lacks self-defense capabilities^[7]. Child abuse not only causes physical damage, such as simple bruises and fractures, but also leads to death in severe cases, psychologically damaging the development of self-function, which seriously affects the development and adaptation of children. Nevertheless, many parents and

adults in society are not aware that they are abusing their children. There needs to be a change in the idea that corporal punishment is necessary to discipline children. Also, the idea that parenting is a parental right and cannot be interfered should be changed^[8]. To prevent the occurrence of child abuse, we need to educate the negative aspects of corporal punishment in child rearing, and to educate the effective method of parenting. Parents who raise and protect children do not regard child abuse as abuse, but as discipline or not abuse, so it is necessary to improve awareness of it. An expanded awareness of child abuse is needed to first recognize the importance of parents' role in protecting abused children.

Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that education and promotion of child abuse can be done first to parents who are most closely related to the child as well as to the reporting officer. This was done because studies on parents' awareness and attitudes toward child abuse were necessary. The results of the study will help raise awareness of child abuse and help prevent and treat child abuse quickly.

Method

This study is a study on the perception and attitudes of child abuse among primary school children to find out their parents' perception of child abuse as a social problem. This study was conducted on 300 mothers of students attending two elementary schools located in area C. This study required that questionnaires be distributed and responded online from 2 March to 10 March 2019. First, they agreed to participate in the study on their own and stated that their responses should be kept secret in addition to the study.

In order to explore recognition by type of child abuse (physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect) based on the Child Welfare Act, this study used a measure of child abuse assessment developed by Hong and Lee^[9]. The tool consists of 29 questions, classified into 8 questions of physical abuse, 5 questions of emotional abuse, 7 questions of sexual abuse, and 9 questions of neglect. To identify the perception by type of child abuse, the survey was answered with a five-point equilibrium scale of "Not at all" (1 point) "I don't think it's abuse" (2 point) "I don't know if it's abuse" (3 point) "I think it's abuse," (4 point) and (5 point).

'Awareness of Finding and Countermeasures for Abuse Children' used a tool developed by Baek^[10]. The contents were composed of seven total questions,

including how to cope with abuse, how to report child abuse, whether to recognize child abuse, whether to recognize child abuse, whether to operate a reporting phone, whether to recognize a reporting obligation, and whether to recognize a reporting officer in Article 26 of the Child Abuse Act.

Result and Discussion

1. General Characteristics: The general characteristics consisted of items of respondents’ age, educational level, religion, income level and occupational status <Table 1>. The comparable figures were 62.2% in their 40’s, 31.8% in their 30’s and 6% in their 20’s. Fifty-eight. 3% of college graduates, 35.2% below high school graduates, and 6.5% above graduate school graduates. Religion was 45.8% without religion, 33.2% with Christianity, 13% with Catholicism and 8% with Buddhism. The income level was 61.5% below 3 million won to 5 million won, 30.2% over 5 million won and 8.3% below 3 million won. The employment status was 74.5% without a job and 25.5% with a job.

Table 1: General characteristics

Categorization		N	%
Age	20’s	18	6.0
	30’s	95	31.8
	40’s and above	187	62.2
Academic background	Below high school graduation	106	35.2
	A college graduate	175	58.3
	Graduate degree or higher	19	6.5
Religion	Christianity	100	33.2
	Catholic	39	13.0
	Buddhism	24	8.0
	No religion	137	45.8
Monthly income	Less than 3 million won	25	8.3
	3 million won - 5 million won	184	61.5
	5 million won or more	91	30.2
Occupation status	Yes	77	25.5
	No	223	74.5

2. Recognition of abuse by type of child abuse: Awareness of child abuse is shown in Table 2. Child abuse was the highest with 4.48 points, physical abuse with 4.46 points, emotional abuse with 4.33 points, sexual abuse with 4.88 points and neglect with 4.29 points, while parental awareness of child abuse was generally high.

Table 2: Recognition of abuse by type of child abuse

Categorization		M	SD
Child abuse		4.48	0.333
Type	Physical abuse	4.46	0.389
	Emotional abuse	4.33	0.456
	Sexual abuse	4.88	0.321
	Neglect of duty	4.29	0.435

- 3. Differences in the perception of child abuse according to general characteristics:** A look at the differences in type perception of child abuse showed that there were no differences in age, religion, income level and job status, and there were differences in education level. Those who answered that they were college graduates and those who graduated from graduate schools were higher than those who had less than a high school diploma.
- 4. Differences in the perception of physical abuse according to general characteristics:** A look at the differences in perception of physical abuse by type showed that there were no differences between age, education level, religion, and income level and job status.
- 5. Differences in the perception of emotional abuse according to general characteristics:** A look at the differences in the type of perception of emotional abuse showed that there were no differences between age, education level, religion, and income level and job status.
- 6. Differences in the perception of sexual abuse according to general characteristics:** A study of the differences in perceptions of different types of sexual abuse showed that there were no differences in age, education, religion or job status, and that there were differences in income levels. Those who answered more than 5 million won were higher than those who said less than 3 million won.
- 7. Differences in the perception of neglect of duty according to general characteristics:** A study of the differences in perceptions of types of neglect showed that there were no differences in age, religion, income level and job status, and there were differences in education level. Those who answered “more than graduate school” and those who answered “college graduate” were better aware of neglect than those who said they should graduate from high school.

Looking at the differences in perceptions of different types of child abuse depending on whether or not child abuse is discovered, respondents with experience in finding children are more aware of physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect and child abuse as a whole than those with no experience of discovery.

A study of the degree of awareness by type of child abuse based on the recognition of child abuse obligations showed that respondents who were aware of the reporting obligation were all more aware of physical and emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and child abuse than those who were not aware of it, but no statistical difference was made

Discussion

To summarize the results, the parents' awareness of child abuse was high, and the perception by type was shown in the order of sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. A look at the differences according to general characteristics showed that there were no differences among age groups. Depending on the level of educational background, the higher the level of educational background, the more accurate it is to recognize child abuse and neglect. Religion has shown no difference. The higher the income level of households, the more accurately they perceive sexual abuse. Lastly, there is no difference depending on whether or not they are employed.

Second, awareness of how to deal with child abuse accounted for a high percentage of respondents who had no experience finding abused children. Respondents who had found that they did not take action because they were not serious enough to intervene or because the evidence was not clear. According to the method of reporting, most of the respondents who did not know about the obligation to report the report by phone showed a high percentage of the respondents who knew about the obligation to report the report.

The perception by type of child abuse by third-parent child abuse detection experience showed that respondents with experience in finding children are more likely to recognize physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect and child abuse as a whole than those with no experience of discovery. There were also no significant differences in the recognition of different types of child abuse depending on whether the reporting obligation was recognized.

From the above findings, the perception of the seriousness of child abuse cases was high, but parents' experience of finding abusive children was relatively low. I think this is a result of a lack of clear distinction between child abuse and proper information about child abuse. Therefore, more publicity and regular education will be needed by developing practical programs on preventive parenting so that child abuse can be established with clear measures and criteria to be connected to actual behavior. In addition, it will be required to realize the importance of awareness of child abuse, make it legally mandatory for lectures and programs on parental education, and implement information education related to child protection services to cope with child abuse.

Conclusion

In this study, the awareness of the seriousness of the occurrence of child abuse was high, but parents' experience of finding abusive children was relatively low. This is a lack of proper information about child abuse that makes it hard to distinguish between child abuses. Therefore, it is necessary to establish clear measures and criteria for child abuse to be applicable in real life. Practical programs on preventive parenting should be developed for this purpose. It will also require more publicity and regular education. It should also realize the importance of awareness of child abuse and make it legally mandatory for parent education lectures and programs related to it. Information education related to child protection services shall be mandatory to cope with the occurrence of child abuse. In particular, public relations should be carried out on a national level so that there is no difficulty in coping with the role and function of the Center for Prevention of Child Abuse and simple report reception calls.

Also, the idea that corporal punishment is necessary to discipline should be changed. And the idea that parenting is a parental right should be changed. Therefore, in order to prevent the occurrence of child abuse, research is needed on the effects of programs that explain the negative aspects of corporal punishment in child care and educate more effective child care method.

Ethical Clearance: Not required

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Conflict of Interest: Nil

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