A social work study on family patterns and child abuse

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CHRONICLE	ABSTRACT
	This paper presents a social work study on relationship between different family characteristics and child abuse in city of Jarghooye located in province of Esfahan, Iran. The proposed study selects a sample of 50 people and using some statistical tests verifies the effects of three factors including family income, family educational background and family size on child abuse. The results indicate that while there were some meaningful relationships between family income and family educational background, there was not any statistical evidence to believe on such relationship between family size and child abuse.

1. Introduction

For years, there have been tremendous efforts on learning more about the factors influencing child abuse across the world (Straus, 1979). Ben-Natan et al. (2014) identified risk factors typical of various kinds of suspected child abuse reported at a hospital. In this survey, physical abuse was the most frequently reported of all kinds of suspected child abuse where nurses identified most cases in the emergency room. Romero-Martínez et al. (2014) studied the role the parents' gender, timing of childhood abuse and socio-demographic variables on the relationship between parents' history of childhood physical abuse and current risk for children on a sample of 920 parents from the Portuguese National Representative Study of Psychosocial Context of Child Abuse and Neglect. The results indicated that fathers had lower current potential risk of becoming physical abuse perpetrators with their children than mothers although they did not varied in their physical victimization history. In addition, the risk was higher in parents with continuous history of victimization than in parents without victimization. The model also showed that for fathers and mothers separately similar socio-

demographic variables could predict the potential risk of becoming physical abuses perpetrators. Nevertheless, the timing of victimization was different for fathers and mothers. The study targeted specific variables, which could enable professionals to select groups of parents at greater require of participating in abuse prevention programs.

McCarthy et al. (2013) investigated whether parents at high-risk for child physical abuse (CPA) varied from low-risk parents in their likelihood to infer positive traits and negative traits from children's behaviors. They examined the contributions of automatic processes and controlled processes to task performance based on process dissociation procedures. They reported that low CPA risk parents were substantially less likely to indicate negative traits in behavioral descriptions of children when negative traits were vaguely. On the contrary, high CPA risk parents had the same chance to indicate negative traits regardless of whether the traits were implied, vaguely or strongly.

Herendeen et al. (2014) examined the experiences of pediatric nurse practitioners (PNPs) in the identification and management of child abuse. The study determined the frequency of their reporting, and described the impacts, attitudes, and confidence in reporting child abuse. Rodriguez (2013) utilized an analog task of parental empathy to study the relationship between parental empathy and one's own child with physical child abuse potential and with their likelihood to punish perceived child misbehavior. Their findings implied that parental demonstration of poorer empathic ability on the analog task was substantially associated with increased physical abuse potential, likelihood to punish, and negative child attributions. Nevertheless, self-reported dispositional empathy indicated the pattern of inconsistent associations previously observed in the literature.

Öncü et al. (2013) studied the factors influencing the abuse that the children under 18 who were working full-time at a workplace and enrolled in a vocational training center. They determined that totally 62.5% of the apprentices were subjected to abuse at their workplaces. In their survey, while being subjected to abuse in the family increases all types of abuse; divorced parents, being male, low wage of the apprentice increase the likelihood of the physical abuse at a work place; the low family income. In all kinds of abuse, employer abuse was higher than other people at work. Sperry and Widom (2013) determined whether child abuse and neglect could forecast low levels of social support in middle adulthood and understand whether social support acts to mediate or moderate the relationship between childhood abuse and disregard and subsequent outcomes.

2. The proposed study

This paper presents a social work study on relationship between different family characteristics and child abuse in city of Jarghooye located in province of Esfahan, Iran. The proposed study selects a sample 50 people and using some statistics tests verifies the effects of three factors including family income, family educational background and family size on child abuse. Therefore, we consider the following three hypotheses,

1. There is a meaningful relationship between family size and child abuse.

2. There is a meaningful relationship between family income and child abuse.

3. There is a meaningful relationship between family's educational background and child abuse.

3. The results

The proposed study of this paper uses Chi-Square test to verify the relationship between family characteristics and child abuse.

3.1. The first hypothesis: The effect of family size on child abuse

The first hypothesis of the survey investigates the effects of family size on child abuse. The implementation of Chi-Square test between these two component yields Chi-Square = 0.045 with df = 1 and Sig. 0.832. Therefore, we can conclude that there was not any meaningful relationship between these two components and the first hypothesis of the survey was not confirmed.

3.2. The second hypothesis: The effect of family income on child abuse

The second hypothesis of the survey examines the impacts of family income on child abuse. The implementation of Chi-Square test between these two component yields Chi-Square = 8.333 with df = 1 and Sig. 0.004. Therefore, we can conclude that there was a meaningful relationship between these two components and the second hypothesis of the survey has been confirmed.

3.3. The second hypothesis: The effect of family educational background on child abuse

Finally, the last hypothesis of the survey tries to find out the impacts of family's educational background on child abuse. The implementation of Chi-Square test between these two component yields Chi-Square = 13.023 with df = 1 and Sig. 0.000. Therefore, we can conclude that there was a meaningful relationship between these two components and the third hypothesis of the survey has been confirmed.

4. Discussion and conclusion

The results of our study have indicated that when there is an increase in family's educational background, they behave more properly against their children. In other words, educated people know how to deal with their children and behave better than the low educated or uneducated ones. Our results are consistent with findings of Öncü et al. (2013) who performed a survey in Turkey on child abuse. Our survey has also indicated that people with better income treat their children better than poor families. In other words, it seems that low-income families were heavily involved with financial management of their families and do not improve their skills on how to raise their children. Nevertheless, family size did not play essential role on child abuse.

The results of this survey could help us understand that it could be possible to take care of children in pre-school programs and raise them by social funds. Therefore, it is suggested that government subsidizes pre-school programs for low-income families. It is also possible to provide better social programs in pre-school programs for children from such families so that children would be raised in better environment. This study was conducted in an relatively under developed city in Iran and it seems that government would be able to reduce child abuse by offering healthcare, social assistance, etc. to improve the quality of life for low-income people.

Similar survey results support our findings and government is encouraged to provide access to physicians in elementary schools for taking care of abused children and providing social and medical health care. Media awareness is another method for social awareness about the consequences of child abuse and national television could broadcast some useful programs to help uneducated and low-income families to have better understanding of parents' responsibilities against their children. It is also suggested that government has a close eyes on existing rules and regulations and try to improve the laws to support children against any sort of child abuse.

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