

How to Cite:

Neisani, L., Motahari, F., Khanjari, S., & Haghani, H. (2022). The effect of parental training program on the prevention of child abuse in school-age (boys) children. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 6(S1), 12710–12716. <https://doi.org/10.53730/ijhs.v6nS1.8186>

The effect of parental training program on the prevention of child abuse in school-age (boys) children

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Abstract---The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of parent education on the prevention of behavior abuse of school-age (boys) children. This study is a semi-experimental study with Two-group control and One intervention group and One control group. A total of 74 parents and schoolchildren 10-12-year-old who had the inclusion criteria: Iran National – Parents are at least literate – Mother parent – Child 10 -12years old – Lack of education in child abuse prevention in Mother parent and child -Healthy child and Parents. were randomly divided into control group (n = 37) and intervention group (n = 37). Sampling was conducted at a government boys' school in Najaf Abad city of Isfahan province in 2019 for 3 months. Training sessions were held for parents for three consecutive weeks and each session lasted 90 minutes. The data gathering tool was the Child Abuse Questionnaire whose validity and reliability was measured. Before the intervention, immediately after the intervention and 2 months after the intervention, and Statistical tests included Intergroup comparison of qualitative variables used Chi-Square test and Accurate Fischer and Kruskal wallis and comparison of quantitative variables from analysis of Covariance and Bebfroni intragroup comparison used T-Test and alle tests have a significant level of less than 0/05 was considered. The numerical indices of

abuse were analyzed based on the components of the questionnaire using SPSS software version 23. The findings of this study showed that there was no significant difference between numerical indexes of abuse and its dimensions (emotional, physical, and neglect) in the control and intervention groups before the intervention. In this study, numerical indexes of emotional abuse immediately after intervention were significantly different between the intervention and control groups, so that the mean score in the intervention group was lower than the control group ($P = 0.008$). Also result showed that the mean score of abuse immediately after intervention in the intervention group was significantly lower than the control group ($P = 0.003$). There was no significant difference between numerical indexes of behavior abuse and its dimensions in the intervention and control groups after two months of the intervention. Used Non-parametric Kruskal Wallis test determined GPA – Nationality – Economy – Employment Not distorting. The results of this study showed that parent training programs on prevention and reduction of child abuse were not effective.

Keywords---Child abuse, Parental role, Education, Attitude.

Introduction

The child abuse is one of the common and complex psychological and social problems of the society this phenomenon and unfortunate childhood experiences long-term effects and consequences on the evolution and adaptation of personality in adulthood (1). The World Health Organization defined that child abuse is consist of “all types of physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and commercial or other exploitation, which results in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power (2, 3). Exposure to intimate partner violence is also sometimes included as a form of child maltreatment”(4). According to the World Health Organization, A quarter of all adults report having been physically abused as children. One in 5 women and 1 in 13 men report having been sexually abused as a child (4). In Iran, a meta-analysis study was done by Mohammadi & et al. they showed that the prevalence of physical abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect were respectively 43.59%, 64.53%, and 40.94% (5). Therefore, the prevalence of child abuse is high in Iran and the world. Therefore, regarding the results of studies prevalence of child abuse in Iran and worldwide is high.

The results of various studies of child maltreatment have shown that child abuse had many short-term and long-term negative consequences for children and their communities. Children who are abused are at risk for low self-esteem, lack of self-control, high violence and aggression, educational and occupational problems, depression, alcoholism, interpersonal problems, and increased risk of abuse with their child (6,7). Also, the cultural, social, and economic effects of child abuse on communities are significant (6,7).

Individual and environmental factors that increase the incidence of child abuse include family size, low parental education, low maternal age, poverty, parenting style, parental addiction, child gender, child age, disability Mental and physical illnesses, and homeless children (8-13).

However, most of the factors associated with child abuse are related to the family, parents have a crucial role to reduce and prevent of child abuse.

Most studies and organizations focus on parent support and parenting skills training to prevent child abuse. By supporting and educating parents and caregivers of children through promoting non-violent norms and values, providing education and life skills, enhancing family income and economic security, creating and maintaining safe environments for children, and establishing and enforcing laws against Child abuse can be prevented in children **(9,10)**. This study was designed to investigate the effect of education on parents in the prevention of child abuse.

Materials and Methods

In this simple accident study from 98 public elementary schools and 26 private elementary schools, in Najaf Abad city of Isfahan province, 2 public elementary schools were randomly selected. Parents and school-aged children were recruited based on inclusion criteria to participate in this study. Sampling was carried out at two boys' schools in 2019 for 3 months.

The sample size was estimated at 74, With considering a confidence interval of 95% with statistical power 80% and ES=0/7 and due to the possibility of decline 0/015 sample size 37 people were appointed and Samples were randomly assigned into two groups: control group (n=37) and intervention group (n=37). The study inclusion criteria were included: Iranian nationality, Low-literate parents, parents of children aged 10-12 years and children boy 10-12 years, lack of chronic physical and mental disabilities in parents and children, non-participation in child abuse training and parenting. The exclusion criteria were included non-cooperation during the study, absent more than 1 session from 3 training sessions. The educational package was prepared after meetings and consultations with social emergency experts, medical education, reproductive health professors, and reviews of studies about the impact of parental education on child abuse. The data collection tools included the demographic questionnaire and the standard questionnaire of child abuse in Iran that was developed by Hoseinkhani & et al in 2013 to calculating the rate of child abuse(taken from two Latin questionnaires JVQ (Finkelhor, et. al., 2005)(14) and ICASTC (Zoltor, et. al., 2009)(14). This has 26 items including psychological, physical, and emotional domains With a three-point Likert scale (never, sometimes, always). According to Cronbach's alpha, all domains were acceptable ($\alpha=0.97$). According to the average of inter-item correlation, the reliability of other dimensions was also acceptable (14).

The research team decided to design educational clips and booklets during the three months with an alert and sensitive approach. Eventually, the training program was prepared a combination of clip and booklet entitled "No to child abuse".

After completing the demographic questionnaire by both control and intervention groups and the standard questionnaire of child abuse in Iran by intervention group. The booklet was taught to parents with the content of the child's developmental stages of 10-12 years old, various forms of abuse, children's rights, the teachings of Islam about child behavior, the consequences of abuse, and ways to deal with it.

The educational workshops were conducted three times and each time for 90 minutes during the study. Each parent had to attend at least 3 workshops, otherwise, they would be excluded from the study. Immediately, after the completion of the training workshops, the child abuse questionnaire in Iran was completed with face-to-face interviews. Also, an industrial psychologist attended the last workshop to answer parent's questions. The age of parents was not significant in this study. In this study, the parents of the intervention group were evaluated for 2 months after the workshop. Parent's behavior with their child was assessed using social networks such as telegram, telephone, and indirectly through questions from teachers and children. At the end of two months, the intervention and control groups were evaluated through a face to face interviews and standard questionnaires.

The data collected were analyzed with SPSS 230 using descriptive (Mean, Standard deviation, percent, and count) and analytic statistics (Bonferroni, Repeated Measures ANOV, Analysis of variance).

Results

In this study, Demographic information of the samples showed that most of the participants were mother, in the intervention group ($n= 27$) and the control group ($n=28$). In terms of education level, 1 (3%) in the intervention group and 3 (4.2%) in the control group had a university education, and 23 (69.7%) in the intervention group, and 22 (66.6%) in the control group were literate. The demographic information is shown in (Table 1).

The Result of a Repeated Measures ANOV in the intervention group showed that there was a statistically significant difference between emotional and physical abuse at least one time ($p<0.001$). Bonferroni comparisons showed that emotional abuse was significantly higher immediately before intervention ($p<0.001$) and two months after intervention ($p<0.001$) and at other times this difference was not significant. Physical abuse before intervention was significantly higher than immediately before and two months later ($p<0.001$). Analysis of variance indicated that neglect was not significantly different at all times. (Table 2)

In the control group, there was a statistically significant difference in neglect dimension at least one time with the rest of the time ($p = 0.028$). Bonferroni comparisons showed that neglect was significantly higher immediately after intervention ($p = 0.037$) and at other times was not significant. Physical and emotional abuse, as well as child abuse in the control group, were not statistically significant at any time. Child abuse and its dimensions were not statistically significant at any time in the control group.(Table 3)

In this study, emotional abuse immediately after the intervention was statistically significant in the two groups ($P=0.008$). But there was no significant difference in physical abuse and neglect immediately after the intervention. The mean of child abuse immediately after the intervention was significantly lower than the control group ($p = 0.003$). Paired t-test showed that there was a significant difference between the intervention group and the control group before, immediately after the intervention, and 2 months after the intervention. ($P = 0.009$).

Discussion

Results of this study showed that there is no significant difference between numerical indexes of abuse and its dimensions (emotional, physical, and neglect) in the control and intervention groups before the intervention this result is similar to the result of Cheraghi, et. al (15). Although the results of this study showed that numerical indexes of child abuse and its dimensions were not significantly different in the intervention and control groups 2 months after the intervention, the results showed that most parents did not have enough knowledge about the types of child abuse, this result has consisted with results of several studies.

In this study, the parent training program for the prevention of child abuse in school-age children has been ineffective and unsuccessful, and this result is from several studies (16). Three-quarters of the parents surveyed did not consider awareness of child abuse to be serious but in other studies, parents' awareness of the types of child abuse was essential. In most studies about child abuse, especially in Iran, parents have little knowledge of child abuse (15). Khanjari & et al showed there was no statistically significant difference in the mean of knowledge, attitude, and practice of parents about child abuse before intervention in the two intervention and comparison groups ($P > 0.05$), this result is similar to our study (17).

In a meta-analysis study conducted by Chen et al. (2015) to evaluate the effectiveness of educational programs in reducing child maltreatment, they concluded that the educational programs presented in the study successfully resulted in a reduction in child abuse. The child becomes the result of this study, which was the result of 37 studies. The results of this study are in contrast to the present study (18).

One of these results may be the low sample size in comparison with other studies. Most studies have reported that parent training program has a positive effect on preventing and reducing child abuse, but the results of the present study contrast with the results of these studies. The reason for this contrast may be the educational level of the parents in this study because most of the parents in this study had low literacy, while in many studies the level of education of parents was effective in preventing child abuse. Therefore, it is recommended that this study be performed with larger sample size, in more schools, with longer follow-ups, and considering both genders.

Conclusion

In this study, Parents do not have enough knowledge about types of child abuse, so this lack of awareness warns that children are at risk. Although in most studies parent training is one of the most important strategies in preventing child abuse. The results of this study showed that parent training programs on prevention and reduction of child abuse were not effective. However, regarding this study and many studies that have reported parental knowledge of all forms of child abuse, parents are required to learn the necessary skills of child abuse. Therefore, it is recommended to implement a comprehensive training program to inform parents and child caregivers about child abuse at the national & international level to prevent and reduce child abuse.

TCTR Code: 20200205006

Declarations

Funding: None

Conflict of Interest: none

Ethics approval: “All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of Iran University of Medical Sciences research committee (IR.IUMS.REC.1397.798) and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.”

Ethical approval: All procedures performed in this study were following the ethical standards of Iran University of Medical Sciences research committee (IR.IUMS.REC.1397.798) and a clinical trial with code (TCTR-20200205006) per jahr (2019) and Parental consent to participate in the study was obtained. also Informed consent was obtained from parents before recruitment.

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