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Factors related to the long-term effect and condition to child abuse: a preliminary study



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Suvitra Ravi^{1*}, Luh Nyoman Alit Aryani², Lely Setyawati Kurniawan²

¹Undergraduate Student, Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Udayana, Bali, Indonesia ²Department of Psychiatric, Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Udayana, Sanglah General Hospital, Bali, Indonesia

 $\hbox{*Corresponding to:}\\$

Suvitra Ravi; Undergraduate Student, Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Udayana, Bali, Indonesia; suvitraravi 13@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Background: Child abuse is any behavior that harms a child under 18 years old. It can take many forms, including physical, sexual and emotional abuse, as well as neglect. This study aims to determine factors related to child abuse's long-term effect and condition as a preliminary study.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted among 73 students out of 232 students from Semester 7. They have been approached and have been explained this research. The age of students must be more than 18 years old, from both genders who are pursuing their studies in Medical Faculty of Universitas Udayana. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 20 for Windows.

Results: Most of the respondents were age 21 years old (58.9%), female (67.1%), strongly disagree with physical abuse (41.1%), sexual abuse (63.0% and 60.3%), emotional abuse (39.7% and 37.0%), and child neglect (68.5%). Most of several conditions that students disagree with the long term effect of child abuse are sleep at night (38.4%), nightmare problems (43.8%), breathing problems (47.9%), loneliness (27.4%), fears of people judgment (28.8%), as well as fear and anxiety issue (39.7%).

Conclusion: The medical students strongly disagree with many kinds of child abuse and disagree with several factors related to child abuse's long-term effect.

Keywords: Child Abuse, Long-Term Effect, Factors, Students

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INTRODUCTION

Child abuse is physical maltreatment or sexual molestation of a child. It can be a single incident or can be several different incidents that take place over time.1 It is also an important public health problem in this economically racing world. Child abuse is under the Child Protection Act 1999, and it does not matter how much a child is harmed but whether a child has suffered harm, is suffering harm or is at risk of suffering harm and does not have a parent able and willing to protect them from harm.2 For harm to be significant, the detrimental effect on a child's wellbeing must be substantial or serious, more than transitory and must be demonstrable in the child's presentation, functioning or behavior.1,2

More than 3.6 million referrals are made to child protection agencies involving more than 6.6 million children every year.³ In one study, 80% of 21-year-

olds who reported childhood abuse met the criteria for at least one psychological disorder. Many conditions lead to child abuse if child abuse continues. The immediate physical effects of abuse can be relatively minor or severe.⁴ An overview of the potential long-term effects of child abuse can extend into recurrent incidents of maltreatment over a prolonged period of time.⁴

A study states that case reports involving over 2 million children were made to social service agencies in a year. From 2006 through 2012, about 2,000 child deaths were recorded annually due to abuse and neglect, and an additional 160,000 cases resulted in serious injuries in 2013 alone.⁵ However tragic and sensational, the counts of deaths and serious injuries provide limited insight into the pervasive dimensions of child abuse and neglect. Reports of child maltreatment reveal little about the interactions among

individuals, families, communities, and society that lead to such incidents. The services required for children who have been abused or neglected, including medical care, family counseling, foster care, and specialized education, cost very expensive.⁶ Child abuse can have a very significant impact on children's development and their ability to function, the repercussions of which can continue into adulthood. Abuse adversely affects the development of children's brains, as well as their physical development.⁷

Abuse and neglect appear to influence the course of development by altering many elements of biological and psychological development; in other words, childhood abuse and neglect have a profound and often lasting impact that can encompass psychological and physical health, neurobiological development, relational skills, and risk behaviors. The timing of the abuse or neglect and its

chronicity matter for outcomes. Based on those mentioned above, this study aims to determine whether child abuse occurs among students of Universitas Udayana.

METHODS

This research is an observational crosssectional study that outlooks and knows the total number of students in Semester 7 from the 2017 batch who are pursuing their studies in Medical Faculty of Universitas Udayana. This is also a descriptive research design where this research is used to describe characteristics of a population or a phenomenon that is being studied. An observational cross-sectional study is a type of research that analyses data from a population or a representative subset at a specific point in time. An observational study draws inferences from a sample to a population where the independent variable is not under the researcher's control because of ethical concerns or logistical constraints.

The inclusion criteria in this study were:

1) Students who are selected to participate must be from the class of Semester 7 from the 2017 batch; 2) Aged 18 and above; and 3) Participants can be from both genders. Besides, the exclusion criteria were: 1) Students who are not well; 2) Students who are not able to understand and communicate in English; and 3) Students who have disorders such as depression and panic disorder.

To obtain a sample, a questionnaire will be used. The questionnaire that will be used is a modified version of the Pergamon Child Abuse and Neglect questionnaire. This questionnaire contains questions about the students who have experienced child abuse and neglect, how they feel about the abuse, and their long-term effects after experiencing child abuse.

Child abuse is the maltreatment of a child and it usually happens in children from the age group of a toddler to 16-year-old teenager. There are 4 types of child abuse such as: 1) physical abuse when one intentionally hits to cause physical injuries on a child; 2) sexual abuse is an act of picking out a child for a brutal treatment; and 3) emotional abuse is when parents or an adult scorns a child and child neglect is when parents fail to provide basic necessities for the child. The conditions

that lead to child abuse are due to their parents because they did not mold their children with appropriate parenting skills.

The long-term effect of child abuse varies as there are many such as depression even when they grow up and long term or permanent injuries due to physical abuse and sexual abuse. They might also suffer from sleep disturbance and might have poor emotional awareness due to emotional abuse and neglect. The respondents are students of the 2017 batch from Semester 7 class from Medical Faculty of Universitas Udayana. The age of the respondents is 18 years old and above. The respondents are identified and recognized by their gender, which is male and female. The total number of the respondent must be 73 students out of 232 students from the 2017 batch from Semester 5 class.

The data obtained which is collected from the questionnaire will be statistically analyzed using SPSS version 20 for Windows, which is a process that will be carried out using a computer device. The data obtained will be analyzed descriptively, processed manually, and presented in tables, diagrams or graphs with an explanation to determine the long-term effect and condition that leads to child abuse among the students of the Medical Faculty of Universitas Udayana who are pursuing in Semester 7 from batch 2017.

RESULTS

Based on Table 1,73 respondents or medical students pursue their studies in Semester 7 from English class from Universitas Udayana. They have participated in this research wholeheartedly after knowing the terms and after reading the informed consent. The questionnaire was distributed online by google form (Table 1). Based on the data, 73 English class students in semester 7 of Universitas Udayana, 32.9% of males with a frequency of 24 people and 67.1% females with a frequency of 49 people. As for age, 6.8% are aged 20, 58.9% are aged 21, 23.3% are aged 22, 6.8% are aged 23, 2.7% are aged 24 and 1,4% are aged 25. Marital status 100.0% of students are single (Table 1).

From the result that has been collected from the questionnaire (Table 1), it is

found that 41.1% of students strongly disagree about physical abuse on children. 28.8% disagree, 12.3% people have answered neutral, 15.1% agreed, and 2.7% strongly agreed. Therefore, it can be seen that those who chose the strongly disagree and disagree option have never been through physical abuse. Those who agreed and strongly agreed have been through physical abuse during childhood. They also have permanent injuries due to the abuse (Table 1).

A total of 2 questions (Q1 and Q2) have been asked about sexual abuse on children (Table 1). Approximately 13 out of 73 students have experienced sexual abuse during childhood. The percentage of students who strongly agreed and agreed to forcefully tried to have sexual intercourse is 1.4% and 4.1%, where the frequency for strongly agree is 1 person and for agree is 3 person (Table 1).

A total of 2 questions (Q1 and Q2) have been asked about emotional abuse on children. Approximately 34 out of 73 students have experienced emotional abuse during childhood (Table 1). The percentage of students who strongly agreed and agreed to be ranted and cursed by their parents or caretakers are 6.8% and 6.4%, where the frequency to strongly agree is 5 persons and for agree is 12 persons. On the other hand, the percentage of students who strongly agree and agree is 6.8 %, with a frequency of 5 people and 16.4%, with a frequency of 12 people for being verbally abused by their parents or caretaker (Table 1).

From the result collected, it is found that 68.5% with a frequency of 50 students strongly disagree about child neglect. 21.9% disagree with a frequency of 16 students, 6.8% which means 5 people have answered neutral, 1.4% agreed, and 1.4% strongly agreed (Table 1). Therefore, it can be seen that those who chose the strongly disagree and disagree option has never been through child neglect. Those who agreed and strongly agreed have been through child neglect during childhood. The frequency of students who have been through child neglect is 2 people (Table 1).

From the result that has been collected from the questionnaire, it is found that 8.2% with a frequency of 6 students strongly disagree about it. 23.3% disagree

with a frequency of 17 students, 35.6% which means 26 people have answered neutral, 17.8% agreed, and 15.1% strongly agreed. Therefore, it can be seen that those who chose the strongly disagree and

disagree option do not get angry easily (Table 2). Those who agreed and strongly agreed to get angry easily might be one of the long-term effects of memories. The frequency of student who gets angry easily

Table 1. Characteristics of the respondents in English class Semester 7 students

Variables	Frequency (N=73)	Percentage (%)
Age (Years)		
20	5	6.8
21	43	58.9
22	17	23.3
23	5	6.8
24	2	2.7
25	1	1.4
Gender		
Male	24	32.9
Female	39	67.1
Physical Abuse		
Strongly Disagree	30	41.1
Disagree	21	28.
Neutral	9	12.3
Agree	11	15.1
Strongly Agree	2	2.7
Sexual Abuse (Q1)		
Strongly Disagree	46	63.0
Disagree	19	26.0
Neutral	4	5.5
Agree	3	4.1
Strongly Agree	1	1.4
Sexual Abuse (Q2)		
Strongly Disagree	44	60.3
Disagree	19	26.0
Neutral	1	1.4
Agree	7	9.6
Strongly Agree	2	2.7
Emotional Abuse (Q1)	2	2.7
Strongly Disagree	29	39.7
Disagree	17	23.3
Neutral	10	13.7
Agree	12	6.4
Strongly Agree	5	6.8
Emotional Abuse (Q2)	3	0.0
Strongly Disagree	27	37.0
Disagree	15	20.5
Neutral		
	14	19.2 16.4
Agree	12	
Strongly Agree Child Neglect	5	6.8
_	50	60.5
Strongly Disagree	50	68.5
Disagree	16	21.9
Neutral	5	6.8
Agree	1	1.4
Strongly Agree	1	1.4

is 24 out of 73 students (Table 2).

From the result that has been collected from the questionnaire, it is found that 12.3% with a frequency of 9 students strongly disagree about it. 34.8% disagree with a frequency of 28 students, 20.5% which means 15 people have answered neutral, 16.4% agreed, and 12.3% strongly agreed. Therefore, it can be seen that those who chose the strongly disagree and disagree option do not find it difficult to sleep at night (Table 2). Those who agreed and strongly agreed to find it difficult to sleep at night might be one of the long-term effects of past memories. The frequency of student who gets angry easily is 21 out of 73 students (Table 2).

Based on the result that has been collected, it is found that 16.4% with a frequency of 12 students strongly disagree about having nightmares. 43.8% disagree with a frequency of 32 students, 20.5% which means 15 people have answered neutral, 15.1% agreed, and 4.1% strongly agreed. Therefore, it can be seen that those who chose the strongly disagree and disagree option do not have nightmares often (Table 2). Those who agreed and strongly agreed have nightmares often, which might be one of the long-term effects of past memories. The frequency of student who gets nightmare often are 14 out of 73 students (Table 2).

Based on the result collected, it is found that 83.5% with a frequency of 61 students do not have breathing problems. 9.6%, which means 7 people have answered neutral, and 6.9% feel difficult to breathe with a frequency of 5 people. Therefore, it can be seen that those who chose the strongly disagree and disagree option do not have breathing problems (Table 2). Those who agreed and strongly agreed have difficulty in breathing and this might be one of the long-term effects of past memories (Table 2).

From the result that has been collected, it is found that 45.2% with a frequency of 33 students are always worried about what their parents will say about them. 24.7% means 18 people have answered neutral, and 30.1% are always worried about what their parents will say about them, with a frequency of 22 people. Therefore, it can be seen that those who chose the strongly disagree and disagree option are always worried about what their parents will say

about them (Table 2). Those who agreed and strongly agreed are always worried about what their parents will say about them and this might be one of the long-term effects of past memories (Table 2).

Based on the results that have been

Table 2. The condition that leads to the long term effect of child abuse

Variables	Frequency (N=73)	Percentage (%)
Anger Issue		(10)
Strongly Disagree	6	8.2
Disagree	17	23.3
Neutral	26	35.6
Agree	13	17.8
Strongly Agree	11	15.1
Sleep at night		
Strongly Disagree	9	12.3
Disagree	28	38.4
Neutral	15	20.5
Agree	12	16.4
Strongly Agree	9	12.3
Nightmare Problems		
Strongly Disagree	12	16.4
Disagree	32	43.8
Neutral	15	20.5
Agree	11	15.1
Strongly Agree	3	4.1
Breathing Problem		
Strongly Disagree	26	35.6
Disagree	35	47.9
Neutral	7	9.6
Agree	4	5.5
Strongly Agree	1	1.4
Loneliness		
Strongly Disagree	13	17.8
Disagree	20	27.4
Neutral	16	21.9
Agree	10	13.7
Strongly Agree	14	19.2
Fears of People Judgment		
Strongly Disagree	12	16.4
Disagree	21	28.8
Neutral	18	24.7
Agree	15	20.5
Strongly Agree	7	9.6
Fear and Anxiety Issue		
Strongly Disagree	28	38.4
Disagree	29	39.7
Neutral	10	13.7
Agree	2	2.7
Strongly Agree	4	5.5
Suicidal Thoughts and Attempts		
Strongly Disagree	32	43.8
Disagree	13	17.8
Neutral	8	11.0
Agree	10	13.7
Strongly Agree	10	13.7

collected, it is found that 78.1%, with a frequency of 57 students are always haunted by fear every time they wake up. 13.7%, which means 10 people have answered neutral and 7.7% are always haunted by fear every time they wake up with a frequency of 6 people. Therefore, it can be seen that those who chose the strongly disagree and disagree option do not always haunt by fear every time they wake up (Table 2). Those who agreed and strongly agreed are always haunted by fear every time they wake them up and this might be one of the long-term effects of past memories (Table 2).

Based on result that has been collected, it is found that 61.6% with a frequency of 45 students do not have suicidal thoughts, about 11.0% have answered neutral, and 27.4% have suicidal thoughts. Those who agreed and strongly agreed have suicidal thoughts, which might be one of the long-term effects of past memories (Table 2).

DISCUSSION

Almost three in four children-or 300 million children-2-4 years of age are routinely subject to physical punishment and/or psychological harassment by parents and caregivers. One in five women and one in 13 men report having been sexually assaulted as a child aged 0-17 years. 120 million girls and young women under the age of 20 have had a form of unwanted sexual intercourse. Consequences of child maltreatment include compromised lifetime physical and mental wellbeing, and social and occupational consequences will inevitably slow down economic and social growth in the nation.9 An infant who is abused is more likely to assault others as an adult, such the aggression is carried down from one generation to the next. It is also important to disrupt this cycle of aggression and thus establish constructive multi-generational impacts.9 Preventing child maltreatment when it happens is possible and involves a multisectoral solution. Successful preventive methods include help for caregivers and teaching appropriate parenting skills and law enforcement to discourage physical discipline. Continuing to care for children and families will reduce the risk of recurring maltreatment and decrease the effects.10

Child violence is the abuse and neglect of minors under 18 years of age.¹¹ It encompasses all forms of physical and/ or emotional ill-treatment, sexual assault, negligence or other degradation that result in real or possible harm to the health, survival, growth or reputation of the child in the form of a relationship of responsibility, trust or control.¹¹

However, international surveys have found that almost 3 in 4 children aged 2-4 years are routinely subject to physical discipline and/or psychological harassment by parents and caregivers, and 1 in 5 women and 1 in 13 men experience sexual exploitation as a child. ¹² An estimated 40,150 deaths per year are recorded in children under 18 years of age, some of which are believed to be due to child maltreatment. ¹²

This statistic almost definitely underestimates the true nature of the epidemic since many child maltreatment deaths are mistakenly due to slips, burns, drowning and other reasons. In armed conflict and refugee contexts, girls are especially vulnerable to sexual harassment, coercion and degradation by soldiers, security forces, family members, aid workers and others.¹³

Child violence brings suffering to children and families and may have long-term effects. Maltreatment induces stress associated with early brain growth damage. Extreme stress can affect the development of the nervous and immune systems. As adults, maltreated infants are also at an elevated risk for behavioral, physical and mental health issues.14 These behavioral and mental health effects may lead to heart disease, cancer, suicide and sexually transmitted infections. Abuse towards children also leads to educational inequality. Children who have witnessed some sort of abuse in childhood are 13% more likely not to graduate from kindergarten. Beyond the health, social and educational effects of child violence, there is an economic effect.15 It is necessary to reinforce that children are victims who are never to blame for ill-treatmentcharacteristics of an individual child that can raise the risk of maltreatment.

As for emotional abuse, the rate of students that have experienced emotional abuse is quite high. Both males and females equally agreed to questions on emotional abuse and found out that those who experienced emotional abuse during childhood have been badly hurt and feel humiliated. Child neglect is very rare among medical students of Universitas Udayana.

Most students have also answered that they have difficulty sleeping and feeling alone even when someone is beside them. They are also worried about what their parents will say about them. Some answered that they do not have fear when they wake up and most of them have suicidal thoughts and have attempted suicide.

Child abuse and neglect can affect the physical and mental health of the person, both directly and indirectly. Infancy and early childhood maltreatment have been found to have a negative effect on early brain growth and lead to negative mental health effects in youth and adults. Immediate emotional symptoms of violence and neglect—isolation, anxiety, and loss of trust—may result in lifelong outcomes, including low self-esteem, depression, and relationship problems, as well as an increased risk of developing drug and alcohol addiction. If

The effects of child abuse and neglect can differ considerably. For certain people, the consequences of child abuse and neglect are chronic and crippling, while some adults have less adverse effects considering their past.¹⁷ Important influences that can determine how child exploitation and neglect impact adults include the extent and length of maltreatment and whether more than one form of maltreatment has occurred. Chronic maltreatment, described as recurrent incidents of maltreatment over a prolonged period of time has been associated with worse outcomes than transitory or isolated incidents of maltreatment.18

Data shows that forms of maltreatment are interrelated, whereas a significant percentage of people who suffer childhood violence or neglect are subject to more than one form of abuse (known as multitype maltreatment). ^{19,20} In comparison, other forms of victimization (known as poly-victimization) such as abuse or peer attack have sometimes co-occurred with child maltreatment. ²¹ Research shows that

those with multiple-type maltreatment and/or poly-victimization are more likely to experience high levels of trauma symptoms and worse outcomes as adults than those with no or only one type of maltreatment.²¹

To describe some of the adverse effects associated with chronic and multi-type maltreatment, a term that is sometimes used is dynamic trauma. Complex trauma represents numerous and interactive signs, illnesses, and multiple adverse reactions, as well as a wide variety of cognitive, emotional and behavioral consequences correlated with chronic trauma, especially when occurring early in life and including an interpersonal dimension. ^{20,22}

CONCLUSION

Preventing child abuse is not simply a matter of parents doing a better job but rather about creating a context in which doing better is easier. Child abuse can be treated and prevented. It is possible for children suffering from child abuse can overcome it. If child abuse is not treated and prevented, the person will become more depressed and cause death. They should not be ashamed and they should stand up for themselves. No one person changes the world, everybody together changes the world.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no competing interest regarding the manuscript.

ETHICS CONSIDERATION

This study has obtained ethics approval from the Ethics Committee, Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Udayana, Bali, Indonesia, with number 1928/UN14.2.2.VII.14/LT/2020 prior to the study being conducted.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

All authors contribute to the study from the conceptual framework, data acquisition, data analysis until reporting the study results through publication.

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