



Physical and sexual abuse in orphaned compared to non-orphaned children in sub-Saharan Africa: A systematic review and meta-analysis[☆]



J. Nichols^a, L. Embleton^b, A. Mwangi^c, G. Morantz^d, R. Vreeman^{e,f,i}, S. Ayaya^e,
D. Ayuku^b, P. Braitstein^{a,g,h,i,*}

^a University of Toronto, Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto, 155 College Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5T 3M7

^b Moi University, College of Health Sciences, School of Medicine, P.O. Box 4606, 0301000 Eldoret, Kenya

^c Moi University, College of Health Sciences, Department of Behavioral Sciences, P.O. Box 4606, 0301000 Eldoret, Kenya

^d McGill University, Department of Pediatrics, 2300 Tupper, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3H 1P3

^e Moi University, College of Health Sciences, School of Medicine, Department of Child Health and Paediatrics, P.O. Box 4606, 0301000 Eldoret, Kenya

^f Indiana University, School of Medicine, Department of Pediatrics, 410 West 10th Street, Suite 1000, Indianapolis, IN 46202, USA

^g Moi University, College of Health Sciences, School of Medicine, Department of Medicine, P.O. Box 4606, 0301000 Eldoret, Kenya

^h Indiana University, School of Medicine, Department of Medicine, 1001 West 10th Street, OPW M200, Indianapolis, IN 46202, USA

ⁱ Regenstrief Institute, Inc., 410 West 10th Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-3012, USA

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 8 January 2013

Received in revised form

17 September 2013

Accepted 21 September 2013

Available online 5 November 2013

Keywords:

Orphans

Sub-Saharan Africa

Sexual abuse

Physical abuse

Abuse

Systematic review

ABSTRACT

This systematic review assessed the quantitative literature to determine whether orphans are more likely to experience physical and/or sexual abuse compared to non-orphans in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). It also evaluated the quality of evidence and identified research gaps. Our search identified 10 studies, all published after 2005, from Zimbabwe, South Africa, Kenya and Uganda. The studies consisted of a total 17,336 participants (51% female and 58% non-orphans). Of those classified as orphans ($n = 7,315$), 73% were single orphans, and 27% were double orphans. The majority of single orphans were paternal orphans (74%). Quality assessment revealed significant variability in the quality of the studies, although most scored higher for general design than dimensions specific to the domain of orphans and abuse. Combined estimates of data suggested that, compared to non-orphans, orphans are not more likely to experience physical abuse (combined $OR = 0.96$, 95% $CI [0.79, 1.16]$) or sexual abuse (combined $OR = 1.25$, 95% $CI [0.88, 1.78]$). These data suggest that orphans are not systematically at higher risk of experiencing physical or sexual abuse compared to non-orphans in sub-Saharan Africa. However, because of inconsistent quality of data and reporting, these findings should be interpreted with caution. Several recommendations are made for improving data quality and reporting consistency on this important issue.

© 2013 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

[☆] **Funding:** The project described was supported in part by Award Number R01HD060478 from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health & Human Development. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health & Human Development or the National Institutes of Health.

* Corresponding author at: Indiana University, Department of Medicine, 1001 West 10th Street, OPW M200, Indianapolis, IN 46202, USA.

Introduction

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimates there are 153 million orphaned children and adolescents in the world; millions more children have been abandoned (UNICEF, 2012). The majority live in low and middle-income countries (UNICEF, 2012). Approximately 27% have been orphaned by AIDS and two-thirds are adolescents (UNICEF, 2006, 2012). Compared to non-orphans, orphaned youth are at higher risk of HIV (Operario, Underhill, Chuong, & Cluver, 2011), malnutrition (Miller, Gruskin, Subramanian, & Heymann, 2007), other childhood morbidities (Amoako Johnson, Padmadas, & Smith, 2010), and stigma and discrimination (Chuong & Operario, 2011; Cluver & Orkin, 2009; Monasch & Boerma, 2004).

The numbers of orphans requiring care, together with poverty, rapid urbanization, and socio-cultural issues, make it difficult for extended families to absorb these children as they traditionally would (Hosegood et al., 2007; Monasch & Boerma, 2004; Rose, 2005; UNICEF, 2012). Substantial research has documented cases of intra-household discrimination and material and educational neglect among orphans in comparison to non-orphans across the continent. Orphans are less likely to attend school across sub-Saharan Africa (SSA; Ainsworth & Filmer, 2006; Deininger, Garcia, & Subbarao, 2003; Makame, Ani, & Grantham-McGregor, 2002; Monasch & Boerma, 2004; Subbarao & Coury, 2004). Research into intra-household discrimination demonstrates that orphans are less likely to be enrolled in school than non-orphans with whom they live (Case, Paxson, & Ableidinger, 2004), more likely to go to bed hungry (Makame et al., 2002), and more likely to be subject to material neglect within households (Cluver & Gardner, 2007a, 2007b; Cluver, Gardner, & Operario, 2007; Morantz, Cole, Ayaya, Ayuku, & Braitstein, 2013; Morantz, Cole, Vreeman, et al., 2013). Orphans are also more likely to be exploited than non-orphans, including being subjected to child labour (Deininger et al., 2003; Siaens, Subbarao, & Wodon, 2003; Whetten et al., 2011) and unjust loss of assets (Deininger et al., 2003; Subbarao & Coury, 2004).

Although increased discrimination and neglect among orphans in comparison to non-orphans has been broadly compiled and analyzed across SSA, the quantitative literature concerning physical and sexual abuse sustained by orphans in comparison to non-orphans has not. A review of qualitative research suggests that orphans are subject to greatly increased physical and sexual abuse in extended family settings (Morantz, Cole, Vreeman, et al., 2013). Yet, qualitative accounts of physical and sexual abuse lack the ability to quantify or draw conclusions regarding the potentially systematically heightened levels of abuse in orphans in comparison to non-orphans living in similar settings or households. If orphans are systematically at higher risk for physical and sexual abuse in addition to other forms of abuse and exploitation, this finding would add to the mounting international pressure for strengthened child protection programmes and services for orphans (Clay et al., 2012).

Thus, we aimed to conduct a systematic review and meta-analysis of the quantitative literature on orphans and abuse to determine whether and to what extent orphans are more likely to experience physical and/or sexual abuse compared to non-orphans. Physical and sexual abuses pose a serious threat to the long-term mental and physical health of children (Anda et al., 2006; Danese et al., 2009; Herrenkohl, Herrenkohl, Rupert, Egolf, & Lutz, 1995; Maniglio, 2011; Mills et al., 2011; Paolucci, Genuis, & Violato, 2001; Ramiro, Madrid, & Brown, 2010; Scarborough, Lloyd, & Barth, 2009; Widom, White, Czaja, & Marmorstein, 2007). Elucidating an increased risk of physical and/or sexual abuse among a subset of children will have important implications for future policy and programme planning. This systematic review objectively compiled information from a variety of sources and provides much needed insight into the extent of physical and sexual abuse sustained by orphans in SSA. It describes the strengths and weaknesses of the quality of the evidence and identifies future research needs. Overall, this work is aimed at informing policy and programmes concerned with the care of orphans as well as demonstrating gaps in the available literature.

Methods

Operational Definitions

UNICEF defines an orphan as a child under the age of 18 whose mother (maternal orphan), father (paternal orphan), or both parents (double orphan) has died from any cause (UNICEF, 2006). We modified the UNICEF definition for this study to include both children (0–18) and youth (15–24), which is consistent with the definition used by the United Nations (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa [UNECA, 2011]). Physical abuse was defined as an act resulting in a non-accidental physical injury, including intentional assault and unreasonable punishment (O'Toole, 2003). Sexual abuse was defined as a nonconsensual act of a sexual nature performed with a child or youth, including rape, incest, oral copulation, and penetration of the genital or anal opening by a foreign object (O'Toole, 2003). In this review, we chose to focus specifically on physical and sexual abuse. Thus, this systematic review excluded studies focused solely on emotional abuse and studies focused on more passive forms of abuse (e.g., neglect and discrimination) because of measurement challenges.

Search Selection

We searched for any published peer-reviewed studies that assessed the prevalence of physical and/or sexual abuse among children and/or youth in SSA. No registered review protocol exists for this study, although a review protocol was drafted, edited, and agreed upon by the authors of this study before the review commenced. Studies were included if they met the following inclusion criteria: (a) participants were <25 years old, (b) parental vital status was assessed by either the child or caregiver, (c) the definition of physical and/or sexual abuse met this study's definition of abuse, (d) a comparison between

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/344836>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/344836>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)