



Research article

Experience by children and adolescents of more than one type of maltreatment: Association of different classes of maltreatment profiles with clinical outcome variables



Andreas Witt*, Annika Münzer, Helene G. Ganser, Jörg M. Fegert, Lutz Goldbeck, Paul L. Plener

University of Ulm, Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry/Psychotherapy, Germany

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 5 January 2016

Received in revised form 2 May 2016

Accepted 9 May 2016

Keywords:

Child abuse and neglect

Child maltreatment

Latent class analysis

Psychological outcomes

Multi-type maltreatment

ABSTRACT

Most victims of child abuse have experienced more than one type of maltreatment, yet there is a lack of understanding of the impact of specific combinations of types of maltreatment. This study aimed to identify meaningful classes of maltreatment profiles and to associate them with short-term clinical outcomes. A total of 358 German children and adolescents aged 4–17 with a known history of child maltreatment were included in the study. Through interviews and questionnaires, information was obtained from participants and their primary caregivers on history of maltreatment, sociodemographics, psychopathology, level of psychosocial functioning, and health-related quality of life. Types of abuse were categorized into six major groups: sexual abuse in general, sexual abuse with penetration, physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, and exposure to domestic violence. A latent class analysis (LCA) was performed to determine distinct multi-type maltreatment profiles, which were then assessed for their associations with the sociodemographic and clinical outcome variables. The LCA revealed that participants could be categorized into three meaningful classes according to history of maltreatment: (1) experience of multiple types of maltreatment excluding sexual abuse (63.1%), (2) experience of multiple types of maltreatment including sexual abuse (26.5%), and (3) experience of predominantly sexual abuse (10.3%). Members of Class 2 showed significantly worse short-term outcomes on psychopathology, level of functioning, and quality of life compared to the other classes. Three distinct profiles of multiple types of maltreatment were empirically identified in this sample. Exposure to multiple types of abuse was associated with poorer outcomes.

© 2016 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

A history of child abuse and neglect impacts healthy development (Buckingham & Daniolos, 2013; Silverman, Reinherz, & Giaconia, 1996) and can lead to diverse consequences that may persist into adulthood (Buckingham & Daniolos, 2013; De Bellis, 2001; Felitti et al., 1998; Gilbert et al., 2009). Attempts have been made in the literature to distinguish between different types of child maltreatment. While earlier research focused primarily on sexual and physical abuse, other types have more

* Corresponding author at: University of Ulm, Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry/Psychotherapy, Steinhövelstraße 1, 89075 Ulm, Germany. Tel.: +49 731 500 61639.

E-mail address: Andreas.Witt@uniklinik-ulm.de (A. Witt).

recently come to attention. For example, the World Health Organization (WHO), in cooperation with the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN), defined four categories: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional and psychological abuse, and neglect ([World Health Organization & International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, 2006](#)). In an effort to create uniform definitions across different professions, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) defined five categories: three that involve acts of commission (sexual abuse, physical abuse, and emotional abuse), and two that involve acts of omission (failure to provide, which comprises different forms of neglect, and failure to supervise, including exposure to domestic violence) ([Leeb, Paulozzi, Melanson, Simon, & Arias, 2008](#)).

The literature indicates that most abused children are subjected to more than one type of maltreatment. According to a recent German retrospective population study using the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire ([Häuser, Schmutzner, Brähler, & Glaesmer, 2011](#)), 23.7% of respondents reported having experienced two of the five categories of maltreatment, 8.3% reported three categories, 4.6% reported four categories, and 3.7% reported all five. In a study using a community sample, [Finkelhor, Vanderminden, Turner, Hamby, and Shattuck \(2014\)](#) found that 23% of respondents reported two or more different types of maltreatment. A literature review on the co-occurrence of different types of maltreatment found that while few studies assessed all types, those that did showed that various types were correlated ([Higgins & McCabe, 2000](#)). Another literature review on the prevalence of multi-type maltreatment found that in studies based on reports from child protection services, the percentage of cases with multiple types of maltreatment ranged from 33% to 94% ([Herrenkohl & Herrenkohl, 2009](#)). Similarly, in studies that collected data from multiple information sources (e.g., interviews with caregivers and analysis of child welfare reports), the prevalence of co-occurrence of types of maltreatment was found to range from 24% to 95%. When frequencies are reported for each type of maltreatment, the prevalence of co-occurring types of maltreatment ranges between 86% and 89% ([Herrenkohl & Herrenkohl, 2009](#)). In summary, it can be concluded that different types of maltreatment co-occur frequently.

The experience of different forms of maltreatment by a single individual is referred to as multi-type maltreatment (MTM), and is defined as the co-occurrence of at least two of the maltreatment types of sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, and exposure to domestic violence ([Higgins & McCabe, 2000](#)). To address the need for assessments to include a broader range of maltreatment types along with other forms of juvenile victimization, Finkelhor and colleagues designed the Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire ([Finkelhor, Hamby, Ormrod, & Turner, 2005](#); [Hamby, Finkelhor, Ormrod, & Turner, 2004](#)). The JVQ is designed to assess poly-victimization, a broader concept, which includes the major types of the MTM approach.

In a shift away from artificially defined categories, efforts have been made to study the effects of multiple types of maltreatment. If researchers limit their focus to only one type of abuse, or to the simple dichotomy of abused/not abused, their ability to associate patterns of maltreatment with different types of outcomes is limited as well. Because of the high co-occurrence of different forms of child maltreatment, an empirically sound rationale is needed to enable the detection of such associations ([Manly, Kim, Rogosch, & Cicchetti, 2001](#)). In studies that have used the common approach of compiling the number of types of maltreatment in an additive risk score, findings suggest that a higher number of types of maltreatment are associated with poorer outcomes ([Evans, Li, & Whipple, 2013](#); [Finkelhor, Ormrod, & Turner, 2007](#)). However, such an approach does not consider possible interactional effects of co-occurring types of maltreatment. If specific combinations of types of maltreatment are associated with different outcomes, this might provide important information with regard to the need for different forms of intervention.

A promising methodological approach for investigating potential interactional effects of MTM is latent class analysis (LCA), which enables different classes of maltreatment profiles to be empirically identified and specific associations to be made between class membership and outcome variables. So far, only a handful of studies have employed LCA to investigate the synergistic effects of MTM ([Berzenski & Yates, 2011](#); [Nooner et al., 2010](#); [Pears, Kim, & Fisher, 2008](#); [Petrenko, Friend, Garrido, Taussig, & Culhane, 2012](#); [Romano, Zoccolillo, & Paquette, 2006](#); [Walsh, Senn, & Carey, 2012](#)). All of these studies are based on the assumption that different combinations of types of maltreatment may lead to different outcomes.

The classes that these studies identified using LCA varied, due to differences in methodologies and study populations. For example, the results of Romano et al. were based on a sample of pregnant adolescents, while those of Pears et al. were based on samples of preschool-aged foster children. The studies also differed in terms of the types of maltreatment included and how they were assessed: Nooner et al. included only sexual abuse and physical abuse, whereas both Romano et al. and Pears et al. analyzed patterns of three or four types of maltreatment, usually including sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect. Exposure to domestic violence was included in only one analysis, that of Berzenski and Yates. With respect to the number of classes identified, Romano et al. identified two classes, while the other studies each identified four. All the studies looked at clinical or service use populations, and all identified classes with overlaps of physical abuse and emotional abuse, as well as classes that included or did not include sexual abuse. In addition, in those studies that did not specifically target populations with a history of child abuse and neglect ([Berzenski & Yates, 2011](#); [Hazen, Connelly, Roesch, Hough, & Landsverk, 2009](#)), typically one class was identified that was characterized by a low level or absence of maltreatment, which could be used as a reference class in subsequent analyses ([Hazen et al., 2009](#)).

With respect to the relationships between class and outcomes, the findings of these studies are inconsistent. Most of the studies indicated that the classes with MTM have the strongest associations with maladaptive outcomes: Berzenski and Yates ([Berzenski & Yates, 2011](#)) linked combinations of emotional abuse and physical abuse to externalizing problems, while

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6832286>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6832286>

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