



Abuse and neglect in adolescents of Jammu, India: The role of gender, family structure, and parental education



Ruby Charak^{a,b,*}, Hans M. Koot^a

^a VU University Amsterdam, EMGO Institute for Health and Care Research, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

^b Department of Psychology, University of Jammu, Jammu, Jammu and Kashmir, India

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 10 October 2013

Received in revised form 10 June 2014

Accepted 15 June 2014

Available online 21 June 2014

Keywords:

CTQ

Adolescents

MIMIC

Prevalence

Gender

Family

India

ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to assess the factor structure of the childhood trauma questionnaire (CTQ; Bernstein & Fink, 1998), and use it to describe the prevalence of abuse and neglect in Indian adolescents, and its associations with gender, family structure (nuclear vs. joint), and level of parental education. Participants were 702 adolescents from Jammu in the age range of 13–17 years (41.5% female). We found acceptance for a four-factor intercorrelated model for the CTQ with emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect (5 emotional neglect and 2 physical neglect items) factors following a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Forty-one to sixty-one percent of adolescents reported maltreatment which is higher in comparison with CTQ based studies from the West. Analysis of CFA with covariates (MIMIC model) indicated that males, and adolescents of less educated mothers' and from joint families reported higher abuse and neglect, and sexual abuse, respectively, while fathers' education level was not associated with abuse or neglect. Implications of these findings are highlighted.

© 2014 Published by Elsevier Ltd.

1. Introduction

A plethora of studies have documented that exposure to childhood abuse and neglect increases the risk for psychiatric disorders, including mood and anxiety disorders (Phillips, Hammen, Brennan, Najman, & Bor, 2005), substance use disorders (Moran, Vuchinich, & Hall, 2004), personality disorders (Lobbestael, Arntz, & Bernstein, 2010), and psychosis (Morgan & Fisher, 2007). However, most of these studies have been performed in the developed nations while research on child abuse and neglect from the developing nations is scarce. One among them is India, where over the past few decades the issue of child abuse and neglect has been highlighted as an area of concern but well-conducted studies on its prevalence are still rare.

1.1. Child abuse and neglect in India and reports from Western countries

The largest survey on child abuse conducted in India was carried out in 13 states (out of 28) by the Ministry of Women and

Child Development. It indicated that in the age group of 13–18 years, 23.2% of children not going to school face physical abuse and 26.5% face emotional abuse in family settings, while 30.5% of school-going children in this age face corporal punishment at school and 49.9% reported sexual abuse (Kacker, Varadan, & Kumar, 2007). Other studies conducted in India including the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN) survey, report the use of harsh physical disciplining methods by parents in 29% of the children (Runyan et al., 2010), and self-reports of physical punishment by 70% of the children with neglect rates of 35% (Zolotor et al., 2009). Still others report that 18–21% of adolescents face psychological or sexual violence (Deb & Modak, 2010). The rates of maltreatment documented from studies in western nations are 7–22% for emotional maltreatment (reviewed in Chamberland, Fallon, Black, & Trocme, 2011), for sexual abuse it is 0–53% for women and 0–60% for men (Pereda, Guilera, Forns, & Gomez-Benito, 2009), while for supervisory neglect it is 41.5% and for physical neglect 11.8% (from the US; Hussey, Chang, & Kotch, 2006). Other studies using standardized measures like the childhood trauma questionnaire (CTQ; Bernstein & Fink, 1998; Bernstein et al., 2003) conducted on a community sample of 2504 German adolescents and adults indicated that 15% faced emotional abuse (EA), 12% physical abuse (PA), 12.6% sexual abuse (SA), 49.5% emotional neglect (EN), and 48.4% physical neglect (PN; Häuser, Schmutzer, Brähler, & Glaesmer, 2011). Another study based on the CTQ carried out among 433 undergraduate students in Canada

* Corresponding author at: Department of Developmental Psychology, VU University Amsterdam, Van der Boechorststraat 1, 1081 BT Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Tel.: +31 205988740; fax: +31 205988745.

E-mail address: charakruby@gmail.com (R. Charak).

showed that 33.8% faced EA, 19% PA, 15.6% SA, 41.3% EN, and 15.5% PN (Paivio & Cramer, 2004). However, the comparability of these figures with those from India is unknown.

Although the Indian studies give an impression of the prevalence of child abuse in India, they may not be generalizable to all states of India as several were not included. Notably, none of the studies included data from the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Some may argue and rightly so, that the reasons for high rates of child abuse and neglect are common across the country including poverty, low literacy rates, and patriarchal society, and hence generalizations can be made. However, Jammu, the winter capital of the Jammu and Kashmir, in particular has in recent times witnessed migration from many corners of the state owing to past terrorist activities in the state, for financial and educational reasons, and job opportunities. Additionally, owing to its special legislative status under 'Article 370 of the Constitution of India' this state often lags behind the rest of India in executing important legislations. For example, corporal punishment in schools is prohibited in all states of India since 2009, except for in Jammu and Kashmir (South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children [SAIEVA], 2011). Past studies highlight the increased risk of violence against children in societies which are in transition due to conflict or post-war (cf. Djedda, Facchin, Ranzato, & Romer, 2000). Such reasons make it pertinent to explore the rates of maltreatment among children and adolescents of Jammu. To the best of our knowledge no research has been carried out in the field of child abuse and neglect in Jammu.

Important issues noteworthy about the studies performed on child maltreatment in India are the use of small samples and the high variability in prevalence rates observed across the studies. Furthermore, the studies relied on information obtained from non-standardized instruments, thus hampering reliable comparison of prevalence rates within the nation and with those from studies in other countries. Given the limitations of the studies performed in India until now, it becomes imperative to assess child abuse and neglect in a sizeable sample using standardized measures that would truly characterize abuse and neglect in adolescents of India. In doing so, better child-welfare policy formulation at the national and international level would be facilitated.

1.2. Childhood trauma questionnaire and its factor structure

One such measure is the childhood trauma questionnaire (CTQ, Bernstein & Fink, 1998) and it was employed in the present study. Bernstein and Fink (1998) empirically derived the five-factor intercorrelated model of the CTQ measuring childhood abuse and neglect in adolescents and adults (details in section on measures). Studies using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) based on diverse populations (e.g., adolescents, substance-abusers, sex-workers, and community dwellers) and across nations (e.g., Canada, Norway, Netherlands, and United States of America) have replicated the original factor structure which includes the dimensions of emotional abuse (EA), physical abuse (PA), sexual abuse (SA), emotional neglect (EN), and physical neglect (PN). The only difference observed among these studies is in error covariance, cross-loadings or item deletion (Bernstein et al., 2003; Dovran et al., 2013; Forde, Baron, Scher, & Stein, 2012; Thombs, Lewis, Bernstein, Medrano, & Hatch, 2007; Thombs, Bernstein, Lobbestael, & Artz, 2009). Further attesting to the CTQ's original construct validity, studies have found no difference in the factor structure across gender, race, or clinical and non-clinical samples (e.g., Bernstein et al., 2003; Forde et al., 2012; Thombs et al., 2007). However, not all studies using the scale have reproduced the original factor structure. The dimension of PN is often reported to be weak, in terms of item factor loadings. Two recent studies from South Korea and Sweden indicated that the reverse scored items of PN (items 2 and 26) load on EN rather than PN (Gerdner & Allgulander, 2009; Kim, Park, Yang, & Oh, 2011). On

the other hand there are studies which have failed to replicate the five-factor model of CTQ. Some studies obtained a four-factor structure suggestive of either a combination of EA and PA in a Swedish sample (Lundgren, Gerdner, & Lundqvist, 2002) or the exclusion of PN when its items failed to load on to the respective factor as was done in a study on sex workers in The Netherlands (Villano et al., 2004). In the absence of a legal definition of child abuse and neglect in India and a validated instrument for its assessment, a first essential aim of this study was to test the validity of the CTQ factors in adolescents from Jammu, and also use it to estimate the prevalence of the different types of maltreatment in the study sample.

1.3. Gender, family structure, and parental education as correlates of child abuse and neglect

Apart from reliably establishing the rates of abuse and neglect in Jammu adolescents, it is also important to determine their demographic correlates to gain insight in factors potentially important for identification and prevention. Several studies, including one from India (cf. Deb & Modak, 2010), reported differences in rates of abuse and neglect across gender. Most studies indicate that males face more PA as compared to females (e.g., studies from Taiwan, India, and South Korea; Chen & Wei, 2011; Kacker et al., 2007; Lee & Kim, 2011), and females face more SA (e.g., from Germany; Häuser et al., 2011; Pereda et al., 2009). Conversely, higher levels of PA in females were reported in a nationally representative study from the US (Keyes et al., 2012) and higher levels of SA in males in studies from Malaysia, India, and China, respectively (Choo, Dunne, Marret, Fleming, & Wong, 2011; Kacker et al., 2007; Leung, Wong, Chen, & Tang, 2008). Notably, the latter are all developing nations in Asia and the results stand in contrast to findings from western continents. These studies further suggest that the reason for higher SA in males may be the absence of a safety net which girls inadvertently come under as they are kept under strict vigilance by the adults as compared to boys. Of the few studies that assessed gender differences in EA and neglect some indicate a preponderance of females over males (among South Korea youth; Lee & Kim, 2011) and neglect (among a nationally representative adult sample from the US; Keyes et al., 2012), while others show the opposite (among Malaysian adolescents: Choo et al., 2011), and still others reflect found no gender difference on EA (among German adolescents and adults; Häuser et al., 2011). The study of gender differences in neglect is pertinent in India due to the social problem of 'girl-child neglect' wherein having a male child is preferred over having a female child, and the latter is often neglected in favor of her male siblings. An early report (Poffenberger, 1981) and more recently documented by the 2007 national survey indicated that nearly 71% of girls report neglect in India (Kacker et al., 2007). However, the latter report failed to take into consideration males as victims of possible neglect. Given these findings we expected to find higher levels of PA and SA in males, higher levels of neglect reported by females, but no gender differences in EA.

Another important correlate is family structure which has a specific meaning in the Indian society. The system of joint family found in India has grandparents, parents, children and/or other extended family members living under one roof with a common pool of resources for survival and growth. Traditionally its nature is strictly hierarchical and patrilineal (Segal, 1999). While the debate on pros and cons of the breakdown of joint families into nuclear family units continues, a study on child victimization indicated that children from single or nuclear families are physically and sexually more victimized than their counterparts residing in a joint family (Deb & Modak, 2010). On the other hand, a study from Turkey indicated that parental recognition of EA is lower in large families (Uslu, Kapci, Yildirim, & Oney, 2010), while a study from the US pointed toward high rates of child neglect in larger families (Brown, Cohen,

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/909322>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/909322>

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