
Parents' Mistreatment towards Physically Disabled Children

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ABSTRACT

The present study was designed to determine the most exposed gender to mistreatment by parents. Also, aims to find the reasons behind parent's mistreatment toward disabled children in Duhok. This descriptive study consisted of 201 disabled children and descriptive method was used to collect the data. The participants were administered a personal information questionnaire, the Child Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ) and Child Exposed to Domestic Violence (CEDV) Questionnaire. The maltreatment prevalence among children of divorced parents revealed that there is the need to address the problems faced by such parents. These problems relate to the position of women in the Duhok community such as divorced women are isolated by society as deviants who negatively impact their capacity to care and provide for their disabled children. The study highlights the importance of family structure in the provision of care and financing the family as is highlighted by the significance of marital status and sequencing of children. The results show that the level of mistreatment with a disabled child was high for a reason like marital status of the parents and the child's gender and the child's order within family.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Child mistreatment is a world-wide problem with serious life-long conorders. Despite recent national surveys in various low- and middle-income countries, information from several countries is still lacking. Child mistreatment is referred as the abuse and neglects those results to children under the age of 18. It includes all kinds of physical or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, negligence or other exploitation, which leads to actual or potential danger to the child's health, living, development or value in terms of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power. Exposure to close partner violence is also included as a type of child mistreatment (WHO, 2016). Many people having disabilities do not have same access to health care, education, and employment opportunities. They also do not have the opportunity to receive the disability-related services which they need, and are excluded from everyday life activities. United Nations Convention (CRPD) the disability is continuously being understood as a human right issue, also a significant development issue having increased body evidence that show that persons with disabilities encounter worse socioeconomic results and poverty than able bodied people. The disability issues are not sufficient on awareness of and scientific information. Only few documents are available that have analysis of the developed policies with requirements with disabilities. asked (WHO) on disability report in concerned the basis being the scientific evidence that is available, including prevention, rehabilitation and management, in conjunction with the World Bank, since previous experience showed collaboration between agencies is increasing awareness is beneficial are controlled by policy-makers, practitioners, researchers, academics, development agencies, and civil society (WHO, 2016).

Child abuse is described as things that causes contradiction of a youth's progress or strong functioning in their surroundings areas, these recognized aspects reveals the youngster's mistreatment or abuse (Kranes & Davies, 2000). Child abuse on a child who has bad behavior and which also involves an important risk of physical or mental harm, is caused by mistreatment (Binggeli, Hart & brassard, 2001). Child abuse is seen at the early ages of normal behavior, such as, when the child starts a fighting and being hostile to others around him or her, such as

parents, peers as well as a sense of isolation or emotions signifies emotional abuse by parents or guardians or teachers (Gesinde, 2011). Child abuse is seen at the early ages of normal behavior, such as, when the child starts a fighting and being hostile to others around him or her, such as parents, peers as well as a sense of isolation or emotions signifies emotional abuse by parents or guardians or teachers (Gesinde, 2011). In addition, child abuse also includes sexual harassment, forced labor, forced marriage, forced mobilization, that is forcing a child to join the army against his will as well as the adoption of a minor illegally through kidnapping or trading get financial subsidies for the parents (Brittle, 2007). Child abuse such as physical assault, psychological and sexual abuse abandonment, neglect and damage, includes forced labor and adoption which results in strong or possible damage to the welfare of the child or its development in the context of accountability, association or belief, or control.

Moreover, it occurs in many different environments but mainly in the home by parents or legal guardians. Child abuse always transpires in line with other types of strong activities, for example, child abuse by parents in the family which usually take place with intimate partner violence (WHO global, 2006). The study problem is the children who are physically disabled in other cultures are stereotyped as being less human; in many eastern communities believe that having disabled child in family is a punishment for their faults and will bring evil and a misfortune to the family and community, also there is researches has indicated that some parents respond with violence because a lack of social. The importance of this study lies in identifying the mistreatment patterns towards children with physical disabilities and to identify the main reasons behind this mistreatment, because the abuse of the disabled has become something common in most countries of the world.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

The descriptive study method was used to measure the parent's mistreatment toward physically disabled children and the reason behind that. Research population includes physically disabled children. The study sample consisted of 201 participants.

2.2 Research Tools

The Childhood Trauma Questionnaire(CTQ)

This Questionnaire about Childhood Trauma (CTQ) is a self-report instrument includes 28 items, to rate the intensity of sexual abuse, physical abuse and neglect, emotional abuse and neglect. It has been validated in terms of psychometric test properties in samples of psychiatric patients such as drug and substance abusers. This data set includes (CTQ) subscale scores which are emotional, physical abuse, physical neglect, emotional neglect and sexual abuse. This questionnaire is developed by Bernstein in 1994. (Cronbach's Alpha falling between $\alpha=0.94$ and $\alpha=0.96$).

Child Exposure to Domestic Violence Scale (CEDV)

The child exposure to domestic violence(CEDV) scale is an instrument that assesses. These measures focus on exposure to violence impact, never addressing the specific aspects of the child's individual experience with the violence that may affect behaviors, emotions and perceptions associated with impact. The final (CEDV) has 33 questions in 2 sections, includes (1) Violence (2) Exposure to Violence at Home, (3) Exposure to Violence in the Community, (4) Involvement to Violence. This questionnaire is by Bernstein in 1994 (Minicava, 2015) The Cronbach's alpha 0.74 -0.76). To verify the accuracy of the translation, the researcher asked two English language specialists, to translate the questionnaire to ensure the reliability and validity of CEDV and CTQ.

2.3 Procedure of the Study

The study was approved by the head of special education school and head of vocational training center. The questionnaire was applied to 201 learners from special education school and vocational skills training. The questionnaire will take approximately thirty minutes for each participant. Informed consent has been taken before applying. The data was collected in coordination with the social welfare public institution and the medical committee for the disabled and a folder consists of research goals, and informed consent forms were handed to people with special needs in schools, institutes and rehabilitation of the disabled in Dohuk province institutes. Social welfare administrators were also informed of the study goals and ethical considerations. They were

instructed to complete the questionnaires and return to the researcher in a safe box. Finally, Questionnaires were collected from 201 participants. Questionnaires were reviewed and recorded for analysis according earmarked for anonymity laws.

2.4 Data Analysis

The analysis of data that were received from participants were analyzed using the Statistical Packages for the Social Science (SPSS) version 22. Independent samples t-test and ANOVA analysis were used to compare independent variables and dependent variables.

3. RESULTS

The present study examined the distribution of parent's mistreatment toward physically disabled children and the reason behind that, with regards to demographic questionnaire about the sample and his family such as age, gender, marital status, education level, occupation status and child order within family. Descriptive statistics were used to report the results. The results are as follow:

In order to find if there a significant difference of child mistreatment by parents according to their gender, t-test was used to analyze the mistreatment effect on gender (Table 1).

Table 1. Comparison of Mistreatment between Male and Female

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	T	Sig.
Male	100	138.56	16.919	199	7.565	0.05
Female	101	113.85	27.990			

Table 1 shows the results of t-test ($t(199) = 7.565, p \leq 0.05$). This means that there is significant difference in mistreatment of parents according to gender (male and female), and favor of males. The Cohen's d value of the effect size is calculated as (1.068). That means that there is small effect size. Secondly, to find if there is a significant difference of child mistreatment by parents in terms of marital status, ANOVA analysis was used. The findings are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Comparison of Marital Status and Its Effect on Disabled Children

Groups	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4118.960	2	2059.480	3.060	.049
Within Groups	133243.856	198	672.949		
Total	137362.816	200			

As shown in Table 2 the results of ANOVA ($F(2,198) = 3.060, p < 0.05$) analysis revealed that there is a significant difference in mistreatment of parents in terms of the marital statuses of parents. In order to see which groups differed significantly, a post-hoc test (Games-Howell) was carried out. The results showed that there is a statistically significance difference between the mean score of divorced and married parents in favor of divorced as the value reached, $p < 0.05$. This means that the individuals who have divorce case show more mistreatment behaviors towards physically disabled children. Thirdly, to find out if there is a significant difference of child mistreatment by parents in terms of child's birth orders within family, ANOVA analysis was carried out. The children's birth orders were divided in four groups as follows: 1-4 children (G1), 5-8 children (G2), 9-11 children (G3). The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Compression between Birth Order within the Family

Groups	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	9836.178	2	4918.089	7.636	.001
Within Groups	127526.638	198	644.074		
Total	137362.816	200			

As it can be seen from Table 3, the ANOVA analysis results revealed that there is a significant difference in mistreatment of parents in terms of birth order of children ($F(2,198) = 7.636, p < 0.05$). In order to further analyze which groups differed significantly, a post-hoc test was administered (Games-Howell). The results indicated that there is a statistically significant difference between the average score of groups G2 and G1 in favor of G2, $p < 0.05$. This means that any child whose birth order ranged between 5-8, is more exposed to the parent mistreatment than others. Also, results show that there is a statistical significant difference between the average score of groups G1 and G3, in favor of G3, $p < 0.05$. This means that any child whose birth order ranged between 9-11, is more exposed to the parent mistreatment than others.

4. DISCUSSION

Mistreatment of disabled children has been the subject of various international concern and studies. While disabled children are three times more likely than able-bodied children to suffer from maltreatment from parents (Jones, et.al, 2012) there are several subgroups within this population to be analysed. In Duhok city in Iraq, disabled persons much like the rest of the world are from all ages, gender and socioeconomic backgrounds. The results indicate difference between mistreatment of children and gender with boys being more susceptible to abuse than girls. A study by (Sobsey, et.al, 1997) showed boys to have higher score of sexual abuse, physical abuse and general neglect among disabled children. This shows the vulnerability to disabled boys always gender differences these mainly come from the social expectations of the community which negatively effects the mistreatment disabled people. It can be suggested that these results reflect the expectations the society has for boys which it does not hold for girls to the same standard. The results of this study assert that the divorced parents are more likely to maltreat disabled children than married or parents in a polygamous marriage. (Goldman, 2003) supports this contention by listing single parent households as important predictors of maltreatment of disabled children. High conflict divorces or separation particularly leave disabled children prone to maltreatment.

Divorce especially in Islam communities may leave the single parent in a poor standing in society. It may cause social isolation which can deprive the disabled child and care giving parent communal support which is the main component for coping with the care giving practices required by the disabled child. (Sadah, 2013) asserts the in Iraq divorced women are viewed negatively and suffer from intense social pressures associated with being single. They are perceived as social rejects and isolates or even sexually assaulted in secret marriages. According (Chan, 1994) socially isolated parents typically have inadequate parenting role models and are less socially accountable for the parenting practices which leave the child susceptible to abuse from the isolated parent. Loneliness, isolation and lack of support are related to maltreatment of children and these three factors are high in divorced parents in Islam societies. Cultural barriers also make it difficult for divorced parents to get access to resources and services required by their child or even counseling for themselves (Meir, 2009). This is a possible explanation for the high maltreatment scores among divorced parents of disabled children.

Furthermore, divorce may also because blended family set up that bring even high conflict between the separated parents. New family set ups require new parenting strategies such changes can be stressful to the parents and negatively affect their care giving. The change of priorities of the divorced parent required by remarriage leaves the disabled children vulnerable to maltreatment. There is also the introduction of individuals who may not be familiar with parenting generally and much less care for disabled children which negatively impacts the treatment of the child. Blended families also introduce the Cinderella Effect that is the increased probability of step-children being abused by the step-parent (Daly & Wilson, 2001) It also represents a decrease in financial resources and support which negatively affect the treatment of disabled children.

The results of this study also reveal an increase in maltreatment scores as the disabled child's order in the family in the family increased. The birth position is a significant representation of number of siblings since most parents are afraid to have more children after they give birth to a disabled child. (Park et.al, 2003) asserted that, these parents often choose to be sterilized after the birth of the disabled child. This decision is always taken in consideration of the energy and resources required to raise the older siblings and the disabled child. The parent frequently decides to focus on the children they already have unless the disabled child is the first child (Di Giulio, 2014) The number of children in the family is also closely related with the ability and the resources accessible to the parent to care for the special needs of the disabled child while meeting the needs of the rest of the family. Parents with more children feel a greater burden while caring for disabled children because these families already have a stretched out monetary budget. They resent the disabled child because the child is a drain of resources for the family. Furthermore, having a disabled child as well as a higher number of children, according (Lerman, 2002) is risk factor for abuse of the disabled child.

This study reveals that the Duhok population has largely been desensitized towards disability because of the effects of war on the population of disabled people in the country. As the population of disabled people has greatly increased more people are acquainted with disability which results in disabled individual in Duhok becoming more humanized and supported than most other studied countries. Assistance rendered by international and local relief organizations have also significantly contributed to the coping of parents of disabled children. The maltreatment prevalence among children of divorced parents reveals the need to address the problems faced by such parents. These problems relate to the position of women in the Duhok community such that divorced women are isolated by society as deviants who negatively impact their capacity to care and provide for their disabled children. It also has implication to their access to resources both financial and social support actively crippling their usefulness in care giving to their crippled children. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of family structure in the provision of care and financing the family as is highlighted by the significance of marital status and sequencing of children.

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