

A clinical analysis of emotionally abused children in china

Background

Chinese children account for approximately one-fifth of the total number of the world's children. Chinese children are vulnerable to emotional victimization like any other children, yet little is known about the prevalence or characteristics of Chinese children who have experienced emotional abuse. Only recently has Chinese society begun to recognize that emotional victimization is a problem and demonstrated a willingness to begin to try to understand the scope and impact of emotional abuse on its children. The purpose of this study is report our analysis of 200 cases of child emotional abuse to further understand the characteristics of this population as an initial step to developing a systematic response to suspected abuse.

Method: We have collected and systematically analyzed the records of 200 children evaluated for emotional abuse from 2012 to 2015. A review of information from the internet and newspapers was done. Statistical analysis of our data was accomplished with SPSS13.0 software.

Results: From 2012-2015, a total of 200 cases of alleged emotional abuse in children between 5-18years of age were collated. boy is accounted for 75.2% of victims. Between 2012 and 2015 compared with previous years, there was a significant increase ($p < 0.05$) in the number of reported cases. Children aged between 7 to 12years old are more vulnerable to abuse ($p < .05$). More recently, (in 2012 and 2015), the Internet also shows its power and there is no difference between Internet and newspaper ($p > .05$).

Conclusion: Emotional abuse is a serious societal problem in China with the potential for long term adverse medical and mental health consequences. emotional abuse can impact on social skills, educational achievement, running away from home, anxiety, depression, suicide in a short term. In the long term, it may be seen as the conflicts of one's gender, emotionality and other problems.

Keywords: emotional abuse, children, china

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Introduction

China faces the challenges of a society that in many respects is both a highly developed and developing country. As societies develop they become increasingly prepared to confront the reality of stigmatizing problems such as child emotional abuse.

The spectrum of emotional activities includes threat, mandatory, Benedict line and So on.

The increase in child emotional abuse reports is due to increasing awareness and a willingness to report. Every society has an obligation to protect their children and help assure that they develop to their full potential. We hope this study will raise awareness of child emotional abuse in China and be a catalyst for developing a systematic and coordinated response by medical, child protection, mental health and legal professionals.

Results

The final sample included a total of 200 cases which involved 200 children. The sample was predominantly boys.

Table 1 shows the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator by year. More recently, (in 2012 and 2015), the Internet also shows its power and there is no difference between Internet and newspaper ($p > .05$).

Table 1 Relationship between victim and perpetrator

	Relatives	Teacher	Acquaintance
	Mother or Father		
2012	46	22	12
2013	55	26	16
2014	51	24	20
2015	48	21	17
200	93	65	42

Table 2 Sources of abuse case reports by year

	Internet No. (%)	Newspaper No. (%)
2012	48	23
2013	48	24
2014	44	21
2015	60	26
200	94	106

Discussion

In China, the majority of emotionally abused children are girls and boys, boys accounts for 75.2% of the whole, and the majority victims concentrated in the age group of 5-15years old. Most of the victims come from city and rural areas. In China, there is a group of children we called "left-behind children". All of these children come from impoverished rural areas. According to the records, some emotional abuse against children occurs in families where there is divorce and

separation, where parents are adversarial, where alcohol, drugs and mental illness contribute. In these circumstances the children have many complex problems that can affect their emotional development, such as 7 to 12years old children become naughty, especially the boy. As for the group of the victims, on one hand, children under 6 were paid more attention and most were still live with parents, the incidence of the abused was less. Most of the victims between 5 to 15years old are left behind children, they have poor protection. The cases of children age between 12 to 15years old is lower than the children aged between 6 to 12years old. May be because older than 15years old children can follow parents much better. The higher rate of females than males suffering from emotional abuse may be because the boy more mischievous, cause the parents to beat and scold. Rather, they tend to be lonely, unhappy, angry, young, single parents who do not plan their pregnancies, have little or no knowledge of child development, and have unrealistic expectation for child behaviour. Children who have developmental disabilities and cognitive limitations are much more vulnerable to all forms of child abuse and neglect. Clinically emotional victimization is manifested by a full spectrum of emotionally inappropriate contact interactions, non-contact events that involve the removal of personal space and privacy, as well as exploitation. Few emotionally abused children experience emotional victimization in the context of physical force and restraint which is referred to as emotional assault. Less than 5% of child victims present with physical signs that can confirm emotional contact. Approximately 3% present with a emotionally transmitted disease such as anxiety, depression, ADHD, TIC. The primary impact of emotional victimization is psychological. Research shows that childhood abuse may leave its mark on DNA in ways that have an effect on stress responses decades later. Others report that experiencing stress early on in life can have long-lasting physiological and behavioural consequences Those consequences can include eating disorders, PTSD, depression, substance abuse and cutting behaviours. The detection of emotional abuse is more challenging than the physical abuse because physically abused children present with injuries that can be seen whereas most children who present with emotional abuse do not have physical injuries. The most available “evidence” in cases of child emotional abuse is the child’s statement of their experience.

We need to launch a national campaign of widespread education in the whole society to raise the public awareness of all aspects of child abuse and neglect.

This research contributes to our understanding of the scope of child emotional abuse in China and now provides an opportunity to build a response that is multidisciplinary and includes professionals as well as governmental entities to address this societal scourge. Over time a body of social, legal, judicial as well as medical and mental health research to inform policies can be developed to reduce the scope of this problem, assure appropriate protection and treatment so child victims can mature into healthy and contributing members of society.

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Conflicts of interest

Author declares there are no conflicts of interest.

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