

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

# Awareness of Undergraduate Medical Students Regarding Child Sexual Abuse in Society - A Cross-Section Study

Rastogi AK,<sup>1</sup> Kumar P,<sup>2</sup> Gawali D.<sup>3</sup>

Associate Professor,<sup>1</sup> Senior Resident Ex.,<sup>2</sup> Demonstrator.<sup>3</sup>

1-2. Department of Forensic Medicine & Toxicology, All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS), Patna.

3. Department of Microbiology, M.G.M. Medical Collage, Indore.

## Abstract:

Child sexual abuse is a heinous crime of growing age children that may victimize both sexes of the child. Here, we tried to know the concerns, opinions, and understanding related to the child sexual abuse of young undergraduate students of AIIMS Patna. These students belonged to different communities, religions, and different states of India. Information was sent by mode using the google forms and was collected automatically online. linkert-type questions were given to gather the information; collected data was analyzed and reported. 81.6 % of students disagreed that only girls are sexually abused and the rest, 18.4% of respondents were not sure about the given statement. 6.0% of respondents agreed that only girls are victims of sexual abuse. There, 225 (45.0 %) of students opined that child sexual abuse boys are not homosexual, but the rest 226 (45.20) % of students, did not confirm the opinion. 100 (20%) students were neutral in opinion, whereas 49 (9.80%) students opined with disagreement with the statement means indirectly, child sexually abused boys were homosexual. Children from reputed families are not the victim of sexual abuse. 325 (65.0 %) of students disagree with the statement, 40 (8.0) % of students opine that reputed family children are not sexually abused, 27% of students were not in the stage of any opinion or either neutral or they do not know about the statement. 202 (40.4 %) of students opined that sexually abused children should not be sent to foster care, but 29 (5.8 %) of students disagreed with this opinion and suggested that they should be sent to foster care. 168 (53.60 %) participants had no conclusive opinion and 23.4 % had a neutral opinion. Opinion of the participants regarding few children being victims of sexual abuse: 137 (27.4%) agree with that statement, a significant number of participants disagreed with this statement and opined that 223 (44.6%) disagreed with the treatment, indirectly opined that a substantial number of children were the victim of child sexual abuse. The remaining 28 % of participants did not give a final opinion.

**Keywords:** Child sexual abuse (CSA); Indecent assault, Prostitution; Social taboos.

## Introduction:

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is a global problem with grave life-long effects on victims. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines CSA as “the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend and is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared, or else that violate the laws or social taboos of society.”<sup>1</sup> The term CSA includes activities like sexual harassment, indecent exposure and sexual exploitation, child prostitution, kissing with sexual intent, penetration, and sexual intercourse.<sup>2</sup> Child sexual abuse awareness in the targeted population should be introduced since they start talking and can communicate information to the parents and others. Very young children are unaware of the action happening with kids that come under nasty action or crime. They think abusive action comes with an ordinary course of affection and love with elders. Hence, this study intended to increase the awareness of adult medical

students about child sexual abuse, as mentioned information in the material and method.

## Materials and methods:

A questionnaire was prepared and sent to the students via email or whatsapp. This questionnaire information was sent to the students through Google Forms. Pattern of all question was Likert type (Are only girls the victims of sexual abuse?/Abused boys are usually not homosexual/Reputed families children are not the victims of sexual abuse/children who report being the victims of sexual abuse are not necessarily placed in foster care), Opinion taken in the form of disagree, neutral, agree or do not know, and information collected automatically in the google form. Participants were students at All India Institute of Medical Science Patna. Participants belong to different states of India Ethical clearance taken from the AIIMS Patna Ethical committee. The consent of participants was obtained using an online google form, and collected data was compiled and analyzed.

Question addressed: Awareness of undergraduate students regarding 1. Are only girls the victims of sexual abuse? 2. Abused boys are usually not homosexual 3. Reputed families children are not the victims of sexual abuse 4. Children who report being the victims of sexual abuse are not necessarily placed in foster care.

Observation: We gave Likert-type questions via online mode;

## Corresponding Author

Dr. Ashok Kumar Rastogi

Email : ashokforensic@gmail.com

Mobile No.: +919300030477, 8252726513

## Article History

DOR : 03.03.2023 DOA : 09.08.2023

these Likert-type questions help to determine how strongly the respondent agreed with a particular statement.

These questions help to assess how the respondent feels about a particular issue.

Here, we observed that 81.6 % of students disagree that only girls are sexually abused; the rest, 18.4%, are not sure about the given statement. 6.0% of respondents agree that only girls are the victims of sexual abuse.

Opinions regarding sexually abused boys are usually not homosexual. 225 (45.0 %) of students opined that child sexual abuse boys are not homosexual, but the rest, 226 (45.20 %) students did not have a confirmed opinion. 100 (20%) students were neutral in their opinion, whereas 49 (9.80%) students opined that disagreement with the statement means indirectly, sexually abused boys were homosexual.

Children from reputed families are not the victim of sexual abuse, regarding this statement there were 325 (65.0 %) of participants disagreed with the statement, 40 (8.0 %) of students opined that reputed family children are not sexually abused, 27% of students were not in the stage of any opinion or neutral, or they do not know about the statement.

202 (40.4%) of students opined that sexually abused children should not be sent to foster care, but 29 (5.8 %) of students disagreed with this opinion of not sending to foster care, and indirect opinions suggested that they should be in foster care. 168 (53.60%) participants had no conclusive opinion, and 23.4 % had a neutral opinion. Opinion of the participants regarding few children being a victim of sexual abuse, 137 (27.4%) agree with that statement, a significant number of participants disagreed with this statement, and 223 (44.6%) disagreed with the statement. A significant number of children were the victims of child sexual abuse. The remaining 28 % of participants did not give a final opinion.

### Discussion:

Study done for the assessment of opinion regarding child sexual abuse in undergraduate graduate students at All India Institute of Medical Science, Patna. In the study, participation of the male sex was 312 (62.2%), and 186 (27.1%) were female participants. Reported there 82.0% of all juvenile victims were female, and 90% of adult rape victims were found female.<sup>3</sup> Between 11% and 26% of adolescent girls and young women in Sub-Saharan African countries that completed a Violence Against Children and Youth Survey (VACS) experienced sexual violence in one year.<sup>4</sup>

Females aged range 15-20 years were seen four times more vulnerable to CSA than the general population to be victims of rape, attempted rape, or other manner of sexual assault.<sup>5</sup> Women age range 18-24 years who were college students were three times more likely to experience sexual assault. Females of the same age range who were not admitted to college/school were four times more likely to be vulnerable to abuse or assault.<sup>6</sup> About 3% of American men have experienced an attempted or completed rape in their lifetime. One out of every ten rape victims are male.<sup>7</sup>

According to the report of this study, the male sex is more at risk

**Table 1: Are Only girls the victims of sexual abuse?**

SN	Opinion	No. (%)
1.	Disagree	408 (81.6)
2.	Neutral	46 (9.2)
3.	Agree	30 (6.0)
4.	I do not know	16 (3.2)
Total		500 (100)

**Table 2: Opinions regarding sexually abused boys are usually not homosexual.**

SN	Opinion	No. (%)
1.	Disagree	49 (9.80)
2.	Neutral	100 (20.00)
3.	Agree	225 (45.00)
4.	I do not know	126 (25.20)
Total		500 (100)

**Table 3: Opinion regarding children from reputed families are not the victims of sexual abuse.**

SN	Opinion	No. (%)
1.	Disagree	325 (65.00)
2.	Neutral	79 (15.80)
3.	Agree	40 (8.00)
4.	I do not know	56 (11.20)
Total		500 (100)

**Table 4: Opinion regarding Children who report being the victims of sexual abuse are not necessarily placed in foster care following these revelations.**

SN	Opinion	No. (%)
1.	Disagree	29 (5.8)
2.	Neutral	117 (23.4)
3.	Agree	202 (40.4)
4.	I do not know	151 (30.2)
Total		500 (100)

**Table 5: Opinion regarding only a few children are victims of sexual abuse.**

SN	Opinion	No. (%)
1.	Disagree	223 (44.6)
2.	Neutral	89 (17.8)
3.	Agree	137 (27.4)
4.	I do not know	51 (10.2)
Total		500 (100)

for sexual abuse/assault. Childhood sexual abuse at 3-8 times the rate of heterosexuals.<sup>8</sup> Lower socioeconomic status families' children are more vulnerable to child sexual abuse.<sup>9</sup> Children in residential care have more risk of child sexual abuse than children growing up in foster families.<sup>10</sup>

### Conclusion:

- 81.6 % of students disagree that only girls are sexually abused; the rest, 18.4% of respondents, were not sure about the given statement.
- Opinions about sexually abused boys are usually not homosexual 225 (45.0%), but the rest 226 (45.20%) participants were not in confirmed opinion. Where 49 (9.80%) students opined that disagreement with the statement means indirectly, child sexually abused boys were homosexual.
- Regarding the statement that children from reputed families are not victims of sexual abuse, about 325 (65.0%) of students. 40 (8.0%) of students opine that reputed family children are not sexually abused.

- 202 (40.4%) of students opined that CSA victims should not be sent to foster care, but 29 (5.8%) disagreed with this opinion of foster care.
- The opinion of the participants about a few children being victims of sexual abuse: 137 (27.4%) agree with that statement, and a substantial number of participants who disagreed with this statement contributed 223 (44.6%) participants.

**Conflict of interest:** Declare no conflict of interest.

**Funding agency:** Non-funded project.

Ethical approval was taken from the institute ethical committee.

**References:**

1. Child Sexual abuse. In: Guidelines for medicolegal care for victims of sexual violence. Geneva. World Health Organization [updated 2003]. Available from: [Whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2004/924154628x.pdf](http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2004/924154628x.pdf).
2. Putnam FW. Ten-year research update review: Child sexual abuse. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*. 2003 Mar 1;42(3):269-78.
3. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Sexual Assault of Young Children as Reported to Law Enforcement (2000).
4. Prevention Centers for Disease Control and Violence against children. 2021. Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/vacs/fastfact.html>
5. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Sex Offenses and Offenders (1997).
6. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Rape and Sexual Victimization Among College-Aged Females, (2014);1995-2013.
7. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Female Victims of Sexual Violence, (2013);1994-2010.
8. Cramer CE. An Open Secret: Child Sexual Abuse as One Possible Cause of Homosexuality. *SSRN Electron J*. 2015.
9. Pratibha, Mathur A, Anshu, Chacko N. Impact of Socio-Economic Status and Gender on Sexual Abuse among Children. *Int J Sci Res*. 2013;5(11):2015–7.
10. Euser S, Alink LRA, Tharner A, van IJzendoorn MH, Bakermans-Kranenburg MJ. The Prevalence of Child Sexual Abuse in Out-of-Home Care: A Comparison Between Abuse in Residential and in Foster Care. *Child Maltreat*. 2013; 18(4):221–31.