



Relation between Childhood Sexual Abuse and Socioeconomic Status

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DESCRIPTION

It can be very difficult to discuss sexual abuse and even harder to admit that sexual abuse of children, especially infants, occurs daily. Child sexual abuse is a major community concern that is the topic of numerous legislative and professional initiatives. The harm and devastation to a child's wellbeing is, however, equal for all acts involving sexual contact with children, as well as for non-contact offences and sexual exploitation. Only a small percentage of sexually abused children come to the notice of Child Protection Services (CPS), despite the fact that its prevalence ranges between 8%-31% for women and 3%-17% for men. Child sexual abuse can have devastating effects on one's physical and mental health, which may last throughout one's life and even pass down to future generations (e.g., depression, attempted suicide, obesity). The rationale for early intervention initiatives intended to assist long term economic engagement among sexual abuse victims could be strengthened by clarifying the scope of these costs for both individuals and society.

Despite taking into consideration their childhood socioeconomic situations, these studies found that those who experienced sexual abuse. These findings give rise to worries that childhood sexual abuse may have a deleterious impact on socioeconomic standing in later life. But as far as we are aware, only four longitudinal studies have looked into connections between childhood sexual abuse and socioeconomic status by mid-adulthood. One of these studies entrusted at sexual abuse *via* official records, it found that persons with official records of sexual abuse reported earning around \$11,000 less annually. Three of these studies relied on self-report measures of abuse. The studies additionally included self-report assessments of socioeconomic circumstances, which are likely to be biased (e.g.,

higher attrition rates among participants with lower socioeconomic status, misreporting). Furthermore, the severity of child sexual abuse can vary, and it is unclear if more severe abuse puts people at risk for negative economic results.

This perspective used a population based cohort to explore the relationship between participant employment earnings at ages 33 to 37 as determined from tax return records and participant exposure to child sexual abuse. We looked into the correlations between sexual abuse self-reported retrospectively at age 22 and sexual abuse officially reported to CPS (0-18 years old). We also looked into whether the characteristics of the sexual abuse in terms of type severity (involving penetration vs. touching/non-contact), and chronicity (i.e., one episode vs. more than one abusive episode) were associated with employment earnings among people who had reported sexual abuse. This is because people who had reported more severe forms of sexual abuse (e.g., involving penetration) might have worse outcomes in adulthood. An estimated 11%-33% of children diagnosed with child maltreatment have been preliminarily estimated by a medical professional for signs and symptoms caused by maltreatment. Undiagnosed or belated diagnostics of child maltreatment may lead to chronic abuse and increased morbidity and mortality.

Overall, our study implies that child sexual abuse may be a factor in mid-adult socioeconomic inequality. These disparities were the most severe types of maltreatment (official reports to CPS, intra-familial abuse, and penetration). Aiding sexual abuse victims to achieve their full economic potential will assist prevent intergenerational transmission of child sexual abuse and maltreatment because wages are a sign of good ageing, longevity, and can protect against it.

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