

Summary

Nowadays child maltreatment pervades societies and has been recognized as a major health problem all over the world, requiring the efforts of health care professionals. With respect to children' exposure to maltreatment, today, thousands of children in all settings face extraordinary risks of various forms of maltreatment daily in their schools, neighborhoods, and communities at large and from everybody not only their parents, but also their siblings, friends, strangers in the streets, and their school teachers.

The aim of this study was to explore the pupils' maltreatment in governmental preparatory schools in Beni-Suef City as well as identifying the associated risk factors with pupils' maltreatment. The study research questions are:

- Is there pupils' maltreatment in governmental preparatory schools in Beni-Suef City?
- What are the associated risk factors with pupils' maltreatment in governmental preparatory school in Beni-Suef city?

A descriptive study design was adapted in this study, the study was conducted in 12 governmental preparatory schools affiliated to the Ministry of Education in Beni-Suef city and its villages, which were randomly selected. (3 schools representing urban areas and 9 schools for rural areas). **The target populations** for this research were male and female pupils from age group ranged from 12 to 16 who were attending the above mentioned settings during the academic year (2015-2016). Data were collected from 720 pupils (180 pupils were selected from three urban schools, and 540 pupils from rural schools), 36 teachers, 12 social workers and 11 school health nurses who were randomly selected.

Three tools were developed and used for data collection:

Tool 1: Preparatory school pupil's basic data structured interview schedule. This tool developed by the researcher after reviewing the recent literature. It included the following parts:

Part I: Socio-demographic data about the pupil and his/her family.

Part II: Pupil's physical health status data.

Part III: Pupil's social status data.

Part IV: Pupil's psychological / emotional status data.

Part V: Pupil's academic achievement data.

Part VI: Experience of maltreatment.

Tool II: School personnel knowledge and perception regarding pupils' maltreatment questionnaire. This tool developed by the researcher after reviewing the relevant literature. It included the following parts:

Part I: Socio demographic data of the school personnel.

Part II: knowledge and perception of the school personnel about pupils' maltreatment

Tool III: School environment observational checklist. It developed by the researcher containing the following parts:

Part I: School physical environment.

Part II: School non-physical environment.

Tools were tested for validity and reliability. The tools were tested by a group of (5) experts in the field and their opinions and suggestions were taken into consideration.

Approvals were obtained for conducting the study at the specified settings. A pilot study was carried out on a sample of 72 pupils, 4 school teachers, 1 social worker and 1 school health nurse who were chosen randomly and were not included in the original study sample.

The main results obtained from the study were as follows:

The first section: Results of the studied pupils:

Part I: Personal and socio - demographic characteristics of the studied pupils and their families.

- 75.0% of the pupils were rural residents and 25.0% of the pupils were urban dwellers.

Part II: Health status of the studied pupils.

More than two fifth (44.6%) of the pupils complained of current health problems and less than one quarter (22.2%) of the pupils was suffering from disability.

Part III: Health habits of the studied pupils.

- Regarding physical exercises, more than half (58.3%) of the pupils reported practicing sports especially aerobic sports.
- In relation to nutritional problems, less than half (45.8%) of the pupils had nutritional problems, losing appetite were the most common problem

Part IV: Social relations of studied pupils.

- Regarding pupils relationship with their family , less than one third (32.7%) of them had weak relationship with their fathers compared to 26.1% their mothers while more than one quarter (27.8%) of the pupils stated had weak relationship with their siblings.
- Concerning relationship with classmates and friends, more than one quarter (27.6%) of the pupils reported weak relationship with their classmates compared to more than one third (34.7%)who had weak relationship with their friends.

Part V: Educational achievement of studied pupils.

- Less than one third (31.9%) of the pupils rated their academic performance as bad, compared to more than one tenth of them who ranked it as excellent and very good (14.2% and 15.3% respectively).

Part VI: Psychological / emotional status of studied pupils.

- Less than half (45.3%) of the pupils had severe total aggression, less than half (48.2%) of the pupils had severe anxiety and around half (50.6%) of the pupils had severe depression compared to less than half (45.0%) of the pupils experienced severe loneliness. Additionally, less than one third (31.3%) of the pupils had low self-esteem.

Part VII: Pupil s' past experience of maltreatment of studied pupils

- It was found that more than three quarters (76.4 %) of the pupils had exposed to maltreatment mainly physical maltreatment as reported by more than two thirds(69.1%) of the pupils ,
- Regarding action taken after notification toward perpetrator, warning and threat of the perpetrator was the main action done as mentioned by more than two thirds (67.7%) of the pupils. While, action taken toward victims, the majority (80.2%) of the pupils declared that nothing done to them after notification

The second section: Results of the studied school personnel

Part I: Personal and socio- demographic characteristics of studied school personnel and their families.

- With respect to school personnel' sex, it was found that 57.6% of them were females, while 42.4% of them were males.

Part II: School personnel's knowledge about maltreatment.

- Regarding the total knowledge score about definition of maltreatment, , it was found that more than three quarters (78.0 %) of the school personnel had good knowledge about definition /meaning of child maltreatment compared to a minority (3.4 %) of them who had poor knowledge scores.

Part III: School personnel's perception about maltreatment.

- It was found that less than three quarters (72.9 %) of the school personnel faced child maltreatment incidence in their schools, mainly physical (65.1%).

The third section: Results of the studied physical and non-physical school environment

- Regarding the total physical and non-physical environment school score it was found that two thirds (66.7%) of the schools had fair physical environment compared to 33.3% of them which had poor environment. While, three quarters (75.0%) of them had fair non-physical environment in comparison to 25.0% had poor environment. Lastly, the majority (83.3 %) of the studied schools had fair school environment and the rest (16.7%) had poor environment.

Based on the findings of the present study it can be concluded that:

- Maltreatment is a serious and prevalent problem among pupils. More than three quarters of the studied pupils were victims of maltreatment. It is apparent from this study that maltreatment was experienced mainly by relatives / family members and the school

personnel. On the other hand, the majority of pupils were exposed to maltreatment outside schools as well as inside.

- It is highlighted by the present study that there was a significant association between pupils' exposure to maltreatment and their gender, working status, poor scholastic achievement and presence of chronic health problems. Child maltreatment has also been more frequently encountered among pupils who had low social relation with their families, school teachers or those with psychological problems.
- The school personnel stated that psychological disorders such as depression, anxiety and fear, behavioral problems such as aggression and delinquency, scholastic under achievement are the main consequences of pupils' maltreatment. Furthermore, they declared that health education and counseling of the pupils, good religious education, and good family rearing practice, proper school discipline and application of child protection legislation are among the preventive measures of child maltreatment.
- Moreover, school environment either physical or non-physical has significant impact on pupil's exposure to maltreatment.

In light of the findings of the present study, the following recommendations could be proposed:

▪ **Recommendation directed to different Ministries:**

❖ **Ministry of Education:**

- Recruit qualified teachers, and invest in teacher training and continuing professional development.
- Ensure religious education messages in the students' curriculum which should focus on the effect of peace and forgiveness rather than retaliation.
- Develop parents' counseling classes and support programs on how to deal with harassment, coping with pupil's needs, problems and risky behaviors including smoking, drug addiction, as well as violence.
- Provide psychological screening for pupils with depression, pupils who have declining school grades, and those with family dysfunction, those experiencing domestic violence, drug abusers as well as those with previous suicidal attempts. So, particular care and attention to young pupils who are at risk can be provided.
- Strengthen role of school health nurses with respect to violence prevention. Support for violence victims' counseling and referral. School health nurse should advocate for avoidance of harsh disciplinary measures, particularly corporal punishment in schools.

❖ **Ministry of Social Solidarity and Non-governmental Organizations NGOs.**

- Provide support for underprivileged poor families who have working pupils to prevent pupils from drop out from their schools.
- Support and engage with responsible organizations to meet their obligations to prevent and protect children and communities from violence.

❖ **Recommendation to country political and legislation sector :**

- Enforce implementation of legislation and policies for the protection of children and the prosecution of perpetrators.
- Improve cross-sectorial and cross-ministerial coordination to increase violence prevention and response.
- Support the presence of strong legal approach to prohibit all forms of violence against children. The purpose of this approach by is to send a clear message those caregivers (parents and teachers) and other family members do not have the right to abuse the children.

❖ **Recommendations directed to Ministry of Health and Population:**

- Enforce and support children/ adolescents hotlines services in all governorates to assist them in case of emergency. This hotline should invite professional health teams in order to be able to responds to all children/ adolescents' needs, questions, and concerns and provide counseling especially in case of violence exposure.
- Preventive awareness programs should be developed through primary health care services targeting children and adolescents. These include risk taking behaviors, violence prevention.

▪ **Recommendations directed to families, and children:**

- Maintain positive parenting controlling practices, responsive parenting style and mutual communication between parents and their children.
- Encourage parental guided and responsible supervision and support through proper monitoring of the children's behaviors.

✚ **Future researches:**

- Quality of life of maltreated pupils.
- Risk factors of children maltreatment.

