

Estimating the relative prevalence of child abuse among children with disabilities in Israel

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Background: Research around the world demonstrates that children with disabilities are far more likely to suffer abuse and neglect than children without disabilities. In 2012 JDC-Ashalim and the Haruv institute convened an inter-organizational forum to address the needs of children with disabilities who are subjected to abuse and neglect. One of the issues that emerged was the lack of data in Israel about the size and of this population and the relative prevalence in comparison with other children.

Goals: To use the existing data to estimate the relative prevalence of child abuse among children with disabilities compared to children without disabilities, and to recommend ways to improve the methods for collecting such data.

Method: Data held by thirteen government services was examined. Only three provided sufficient data. The relative prevalence of children with disability was estimated by comparing the results to national statistics.

Results: Preliminary estimates show children with disabilities as being 2.8-3.1 more likely to have been identified as abused or neglected by the National Program for Children at Risk, 2.2 more likely to be reported to child protection social and 3.5-4.8 more likely to be questioned by child investigators.

Conclusions: As in other countries, children with disabilities are more often subjected to abuse, and services need to be established or adapted to address their needs. In addition, reliable data about the children and their disabilities needs to be included in data bases related to child abuse.

Key words: children with disabilities, child abuse

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Living Conditions and Health Issues of Minority (Roma/ Ashkali, Egyptian) Children in the Example of Kosovo

The western european life expectancy is about 82 years, the life expectancy for the majority Kosovo population is 70 years, in contrast the life expectancy for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian in Kosovo is only 55 years. Causes of this phenomena are the poor conditions of housing and of health and chronic diseases, Roma population can't afford a health insurance neither medical treatments. Due to bad economical situation and great poverty Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children need to work in low paid and health harming circumstances, therefore the majority of them can't afford going to school. Early marriages cause another threat to the health and education for minor girls.

The aim of this paper is to present the health and living conditions of children of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian minority in the Western Balkans. In a second step special programmes from our own research, for improving the life condition of these children connected to a future vision will be suggested.

We will present tools for the improvement of the living conditions for minority children in Kosovo, such as strategies for inclusion of ethnic minorities in the early child care and school, services for young children and pregnant mothers, the project KoSana – Health Insurance for All, reconciliation and peacebuilding initiatives and the action plan of the strategy for inclusion of Roma and Ashkali communities (2017-2021).

Key words: Minority Children, Health Issues, Child Labour, Social Intervention

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Medical Clowns Reducing Situational Anxiety during Invasive Examinations of Sexually Abused Children

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Many children undergo invasive examinations as part of medical examinations and treatment in the medical system. It is known that most children and their accompanying parents feel anxious when they come for invasive examinations, especially after being sexually assaulted.

There is evidence that medical clowning reduces fear and pain prior to and during these examinations.

At The Tene Center at Poria Hospital we conducted a quantitative research examining the influence of medical clowning on the situational anxiety of sexually abused children going through invasive examinations.

60 normally developed children aged 7-14 who were sexually abused and underwent a medical and anogenital examination at The Tene Center (including a forensic examination and blood tests as needed) were recruited.

The participants were randomly divided into 2 groups of the same number: the study group - 30 children who were accompanied by a medical clown; and the control group: 30 children who were not accompanied by a clown.

Research tools: "Child drawing : Hospital Manual" and questionnaires completed by the child, the parent and the doctor.

Results: The study group showed significantly lower situational anxiety levels than the control group.

In light of the results we recommend that all centers who examine and treat sexually abused children be assisted by medical clowns.

In this presentation, we will present the joint work of a medical clown and a gynecologist as a model that enables invasive examination as a reinforcing experience. We will also present a number of children's drawings from the research.

Keywords: medical clowning, invasive examination, situational anxiety

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Family Group Conferences and Virtual Sexual Harassment:

The Perspectives of Child Victims

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Key words: Child victims, Sexual Harassment, Family Group Conference, Restorative justice, Cybercrime, Needs-rights model

Abstract

With the expanding use of electronic media among children and youth, recent years have seen a significant growth of a range of harmful behaviors among and against children. These include sexting, mass publication of intimate media files, unauthorized entry to personal data, and extortion.

Restorative justice (RJ) is a widely used theory and practice in the context of juvenile offending. RJ programs bring together youth offenders, their victims and their supporters, to discuss the harm caused by the crime and possible ways to repair it.

The growth in youth cyber-sexual harassment has led to an increased use of RJ models in such cases as well. During the past year, the Israeli Youth Probation Office (YPO) referred a number of such cases to family group conferences (FGCs), a variant of RJ.

These referrals provide an opportunity to examine the way FGCs operate in such unique and complex cases. Specific questions that emerge include: How do victimized children participate in such processes, what are the obstacles against their participation and what promotes it? What are the typical outcomes of these encounters? In what ways can facilitators overcome the barriers against open dialog between youth and adults in such sensitive matters?

The current study involves content analysis of approximately 10 documented cases of FGCs conducted in Israel in virtual harassment cases, as well as in-depth interviews with the facilitators. The theoretical foundations of RJ as well as the needs-rights model regarding victimized children (Gal, 2011) will provide the basis for a grounded-theory analysis.