



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN CHILDHOOD AND ITS PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS IN LATER LIFE IN UNDERGRADUATE MEDICAL STUDENTS OF SIALKOT MEDICAL COLLEGE AND ALLIED INSTITUTIONS OF SIALKOT

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Abstract:

Objectives: To assess the psychological effect in late life of corporal punishments of childhood among undergraduate students of Sialkot Medical College & Allied Institutions, Sialkot.

Methodology:

A cross sectional study was carried out in May, 2023 in the Sialkot Medical College, Sialkot. A total 300 proforma containing questionnaire was distributed in classes of MBBS, DPT and HND on the basis of systematic random sampling to eliminate selection bias. Approval from ethical committee of SMC was taken after presenting the proposal for study. Consent was taken and confidentiality was assured. Three parameters knowledge, attitude of mentors, effects of punishment were asked separately in questionnaire.

Results:

We found that 92.33 % response rate (23 dropped out of 300) was obtained. Corporal punishment is associated with 53.5% mental effect in students who are victim of such punishments. While 46.5% shows positive growth and there is no correction of behavior.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the study reveals that majority of both teachers and parents resort to punitive measures when addressing student behavior. However, a significant proportion of teachers and parents prefer employing constructive approaches like mutual conversation and counseling. Physical punishment is predominantly administered to the students' backs, significant number of students received on hands and buttocks while considerable number of students reported no exposure to corporal punishment.

Key Words: Corporal punishment, psychological effect, victims, angry, trauma.

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Introduction

Corporal punishment is a kind of punishment in which a person is physically and

mentally abused. Corporal punishment is also termed as physical punishment. It is commonly practiced in the homes and in the

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school premises. According to Islamic some scholars, the Corporal punishment is to be considered a cultural and an educational process in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Corporal punishment can be termed as “The use of physical force with the intention of causing pain but not injury for the purpose of betterment of child’s behavior.”¹

“Physical abuse is characterized by the infliction of physical injury as a result of punching, shaking, burning, beating, kicking, biting or in any other harming a child”.¹

The parent or caretaker may not have intended to hurt a child, rather the injury may have resulted from over-discipline. “About 100 children die every year as victims of corporal punishment and many more suffer from disabilities”¹.

In terms of health, physical punishment of children predisposes to physical illnesses like asthma cardiovascular disease, obesity, arthritis, alcohol consumption, neoplasia, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, liver diseases in adults and reduction in maximum oxygen consumption levels.²

In terms of psychological health, corporal punishment to the children predisposes to aggression, delinquency and conjugal violence later in life,³ antisocial behavior (isolating, abandoned) anxiety disorders, alcohol abuse or dependence, externalization problems,³ psycho-pathologies in adulthood such as depression, mania, personality disorders, suicide corporal punishment is associated with a general aggressive tendency in adulthood, this aggression also may manifest in the relationships with family members.^{4,5}

Physical punishment is linked to a slow regression or cognitive development as well as negative effects on academic pathway, as well as alterations.⁶

Pakistan has passed a bill banning corporal punishment for children in a move described as “historic” by the rights activists. It comes amid a number of high-profile cases of school children being badly beaten and even killed in schools, religious institutions and workplaces.⁷

Act No. XLIX of 2021 provides that “under no circumstances corporal punishments, or punishments which related to the child’s physical and mental development or which may affect the child’s emotional status are allowed”.⁸

Aggressiveness and belligerence is use of harsh words or actions which can harm or made someone terrified. There are a lot of studies that shows a link between discipline with physical penalties and acquiring of bad habits due to strict behavior of parents. Physical punishments have been considered as the behaviour of imposition for taking execration or mirth as a productive tool instead of just aligning them.

All these things which are discussed have been proven that parents think aggressiveness, belligerence and violence are the perfect solution but these create physical, emotional and psychological problems.⁸

Objective:

To evaluate the emotional, physical and mental positive and negative effect of corporal punishment in later life in undergraduate medical students.

Methodology

A survey was conducted in May 2023 on 300 students of Sialkot medical college in three different departments (MBBS, HND, DPT) The participants were chosen from with systemic random sampling.

However, the participants who refused to participate in the study were excluded and replaced by volunteer participants.

The questions were divided into 4 sections based on gender, knowledge, attitude and practice of participation. The response were then scored and graded according to “SPSS of descriptive statistics “

Results:

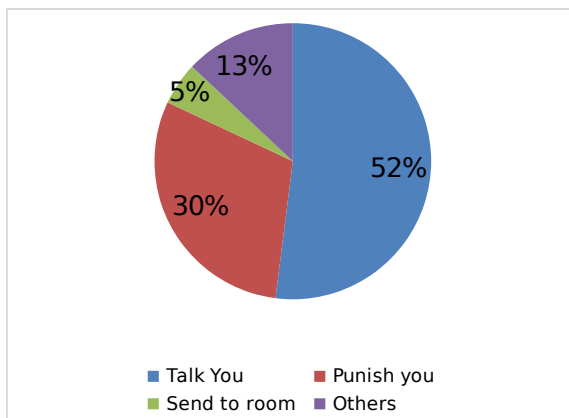


Figure-1; Corporal Punishment faced by students, by their mentors (Teachers/ parents). According to this figure teachers/ parents correct child/ student’s behavior by taking or conversation 52%, by punishing students 30%, sending them to room 5% and others 13%.

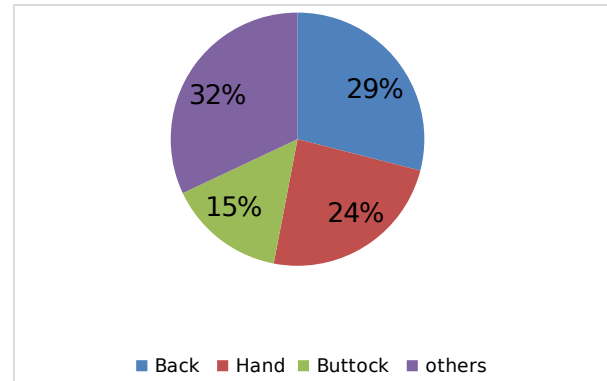


Figure-2; Part of the body that received physical punishment. Most of the students received physical punishment in back part of body 29%, hand 24% buttock 15% and others constitute 32%.

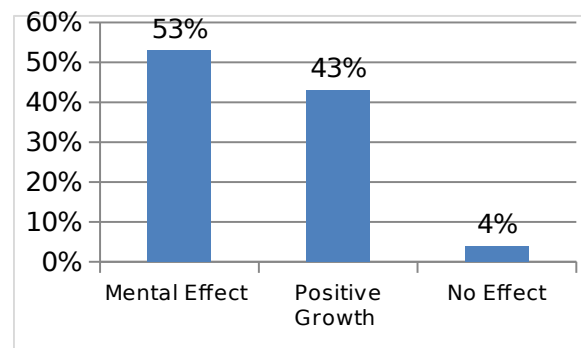


Figure-3; Corporal punishment is associated with 53% mental effect in the students who were victim of physical punishments, while 42% showed positive growth and 4% showed no effect.

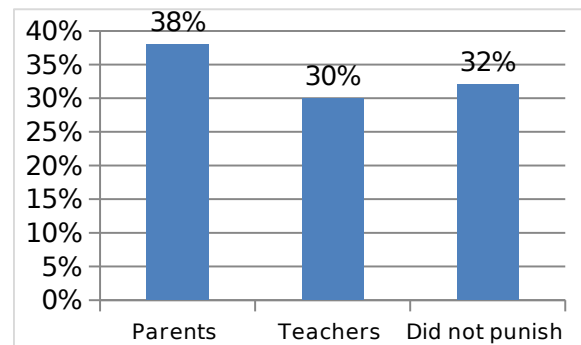


Figure-4; Data showed, 38% parents and 30% teachers used corporal punishment for their children.

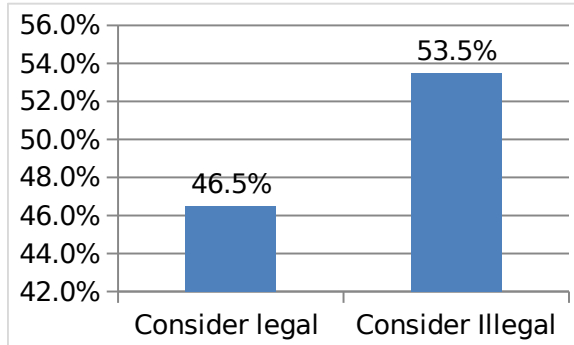


Figure-5; Students supporting laws/ rules which made corporal punishment illegal were 53.5% while students who were not supporting it were 46.5%.

Discussion

A study conducted at Columbia University with the aim to evaluate whether parental corporal punishment is related with specific childhood behaviors. The study concluded that the most common psychological effect/ behavior includes aggression, delay in the immediate compliance, delinquent criminal, moral internalization, and the anti-social behavior have been associated with corporal punishment. It also has lethal effects on the health of the children. The main concern of researchers in this study was to develop empirical relationship between the corporal punishment and potential child behavioral tendencies particularly in longitudinal and prospective studies. The main focus of the study was to separate out the emotionally charged aspects of the debate over corporal punishment and evaluate systematically the extent of the data and theory on parental corporal punishment so that it could be the knowledgeably, responsibly, scientifically recommended and or discourage parents' use of corporal punishment with their children.⁹ According to the studies carried out on Japanese students on topic of the effects of childhood experiences of parental corporal punishment and the neglectful parenting, endorsement of parental corporal punishment to discipline children, in relation to

subjective happiness. In this study the 536 undergraduate students showed no signs of physical manifestations. It was revealed that percentage of participants who experienced the corporal punishment and neglecting parenting were greater in men than in women (36.5% vs. 19.4% for Corporal punishment; 22.1% vs. 9.7% for Neglecting parenting).¹⁰

According to the study on the topic of "Exploring the link between corporal punishment and children's cruelty to animals". The undergraduates of 267 different colleges were evaluated to study the relationship between corporal punishment enforced by the parents and the perpetration of animal abuse. The findings showed that males who engaged in animal cruelty in childhood or adolescence were physically abused and penalized more frequently by their fathers, both as preteens and teenagers, than males who were not engaged in animal abuse.¹¹ Reversion analysis demonstrated that the connection between the fathers' corporal punishment and sons' childhood animal cruelty continued after controlling for child abuse, the father to mother violence, and father's education.¹²

According to recent studies published in Japan on the topic of corporal punishment. The 59.5% students gave responses which suggests that they were suffering from corporal punishment by their parents before the age 12, in this study males are more likely to experience corporal punishment than their female counterparts as 72.1% of men and 56.5% of women have been suffered from the corporal punishment. Externalized problems are more common in the males and internalized problems in females.¹²

Another study in Japan revealed that individuals who experienced the neglected parental behaviour, emotional or physical abuse or psychological and sexual abuse are more prone to developing depression,



anxiety, psychological disorders and borderline personality traits.¹²

It was concluded in a recent Japanese survey that 21% of junior high school students and 26% of high school students had gone through corporal punishment from their fathers.¹³

According to our research done on MBBS, DPT and HND students of Sialkot Medical College 52% of parents correct child behavior by talking to them while 48% use corporal punishment, this corporal punishment shown to have 53% of negative mental effect in the students 30% teachers, 38% parents, 34% others 35% use corporal punishment for correcting child behavior which corresponds the afore said studies.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it was revealed by the study that majority of both teachers and parents resort to the punitive measures to address the student behavior. However, a significant proportion of teachers and parents prefer employing constructive approaches such as mutual conversation and counseling.

Corporal punishment has more negative and less positive impact on the psychological, emotional and mental health of children and these effects persist throughout their lives.

Limitations of study:

We have a good response rate, only 23 are dropouts out of 300. Most students of DPT and HND were female so we had less male response from their general analysis.

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