

Predicting Depressions with Child Abuse Potential among Career Parents in Melaka, Malaysia

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Received: 27 Mac 2018; Accepted: 11 Okt 2018; Published: 21 Dicember2018

Abstract

This research was conducted to examine the relationship between depression and child abuse among career parents in Melaka. Career parents both father and mothers in different fields (N=60) were randomly selected from Melaka, Malaysia. Clinical Assessment of Depression (CAD) and Child Abuse Potential Inventory (CAPI) instruments were used to collect the data. The results revealed that depression has significant positive relationship with child abuse potential inventory ($r=.640^{**}$). The results concluded that there is significant positive relationship between depressions with the child abuse potential among career parents in Melaka and depressions is a predicting factor related to child abuse potential among career parents in Melaka. Child abuse is a complex phenomena which needs to be studied for the management of health parents and child relationship. This study helped to explore the causes of child abuse issues and parents level of depression.

Keywords: Depression, child abuse, career parents, relationship

INTRODUCTION

There is no single factor why some adults behave violently towards children, (Hishamuddin, 2016). Abuse is one of the domestic violence. It commonly occurred on females and children. It is called “violence” because it will impact on children’s mental health into long-term negative consequences. Depression often runs in families especially on working parents. It could be triggered by the unhappy or stressful life events for instance, working burden and social isolation. (Anglin, Samaan, Walter & McDonald, 2013)

Wells et al (2014) examined the relationship between self-reported experience post factors with child abuse, and cognitive vulnerability to depression. They conducted interview with adult participants. The purpose of this interview is to determine the presence of current or past psychopathology. Participants answered CES-D scale, Childhood Trauma Questionnaires (CTQ), Dysfunctional Attitudes Scale (DAS), and Scrambled Sentences Test (SST). The results of the study were self-reported severity of child abuse was associated with increased cognitive vulnerability to depression on both DAS and SST. The findings proved that the destructive effects of child abuse will occur even in those without current or past psychopathology. Whereas in this current study, we proposed that child abuse potential among career parents is affected by the level of depressions.

Henschel, Bruin and Mohler (2014) highlighted that mothers who have lower self-control have higher tendency to abuse their own children. At total of 87 mothers were involved in the study. All of them had pre-school children and most of them had history of abuse either physical or sexual. The Childhood Trauma Questionnaires (CTQ) was used to assess abuse and neglect in childhood. As self-control Scales (SCS) was used to highlight the relationship of variables. Study revealed that there was significant correlation among self-control score and childhood trauma questionnaire scores. Child

abuse is a complex phenomenon with multiple causes. There is no single factor as to why some adults behave violently towards children (Costello, & McNeil 2014).

Exposure to maltreatment, preparedness for child-bearing, substance use disorders (SUDs), IQ, race, and socioeconomic status were associated with the potential for child abuse in non-pregnant adolescent girls (Günther, et al, 2015). The assessment on exposure to maltreatment was assessed by using Childhood Trauma Questionnaires which is measured by maternal readiness. The scores obtained from the CAPI proved that there is positive correlation with all types of psychopathology, previous exposure to maltreatment, and negative attitudes toward child-bearing. Adolescent girls who have conducted disorder or internalized disorder are at higher risk of perpetrating physical child abuse when they have children. (Pajer et al, 2014).

Study indicated that beyond the major role of distress, mothers' social support is playing role to prevent depression. The major role of distress and also the abuse risk whereas the low empathy and negative child attribution further exacerbated maternal abuse risk, (Costello et al, 2014). Mothers in their parenting behaviour were high in stress, depression and high risk in environment to be an abuser (Smith et. al, 2014).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employed the survey design. This study was conducted to assess the relationship between the depression levels with child abuse potential among career parents in Melaka. Career parents (N=60) both mother (N=30) and fathers (N=30) had participated randomly. The ethical concern was followed to through informed consent, confidentiality and voluntarily response. The inclusion criteria was based on parent's ability to understand the English language questionnaire, the respondents were working parents and had no history of drug addiction or child abuse.

The instrument used to assess the independent variable of depressions was Clinical Assessment of Depression (CAD), and the instrument used to measure dependent variable, was Child Abuse Potential Inventory (CAPI) (Milner, 1980).

Table 1 Demographic Information

Malay	29	48.33
Chinese	11	18.33
India	10	16.67
Siamese	10	16.67
Ages		
21-30	6	10.00
31-40	41	68.33
41-50	13	21.67

Table 1 revealed that a majority of the respondents were aged between 31-40 years old with 68.33%. The lower age range was between 21-30 years old with 10.00%, moderate age range was between 41-50 years old with 21.67% of the total respondents. The majority of the participants were Malay (48.33%).

Table 2 Descriptive Analysis for gender, CAD, and CAPI

	N	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
CAD	60	102.72	19.17
CAPI	60	155.98	82.06

Results in Table 2 showed the Clinical Assessment for Depression (CAD) [M = 102.72 (19.17)], and Child Abuse Potential Inventory (CAPI) [M = 155.98 (SD = 82.06)] mean score, which revealed that the mean score of CAPI is higher than the mean score of CAD

Table 3 Pearson’s correlation of CAD and CAPI

	CAPI
CAD	.640**

There was a positive correlation between the two variables, [$r = .64, n = 60, p < .05$]. The correlation value is .640**, which indicated significant positive correlation between depression and child abuse potential.

Table 4 Simple Linear Regression of CAD and CAPI

	R-squared (R^2)	Beta Standardized Coefficient (β)	df	F	p
Regression	.41	.64	1	40.26	.000 ^b
Residual			58		

Table 4 presents the value of R^2 that the effect of depression on child abuse potential. Since p value was less than .05, the results concluded that there was significant prediction of the scores of depression and the child abuse potential among career parents. The data analysis of simple linear regression of CAD and CAPI, showed that a significant regression equation was found [$F(1, 58) = 40.26$]. The results revealed that depression score predict child abuse potential inventory score significantly at $p < .000$ level.

DISCUSSION

The objective of this study was to examine the relationship between depressions with child abuse potential among career parents in Malaysia. This study looked at the prediction of child abuse among depressive parents. Based on the results obtained from this study, there was a positive relationship between depressions with child abuse potential among career parents in Malaysia. The research objective was supported by the results from the inferential analyses of Pearson’s correlation and simple linear regression. The Pearson’s correlation of the scores of CAD and CAPI, showed that the correlation of depression and child abuse potential was significant at 0.01 level. There was a positive correlation between the score of depression and child abuse potential, [$r = .64, n = 60, p < .05$]. The simple linear regression concluded that the regression line is significantly ($p < .00$) predicting the child abuse potential from the depression since the value of p is less than .05. The results of the inferential analyses proved that both of the alternative hypotheses for this study were accepted, there is significant positive relationship between depressions with the child abuse potential among career parents in Melaka and depressions is a predicting variable to child abuse potential among career parents in Melaka.

The results obtained was supported by the previous study by Tucker (2014) where their study showed that the mother who had lower self-control have higher potential of being child abuser. The findings are similar to this study where it focused on parents as the outcomes of the previous study showed that because of parents inability to control their sadness, there is tendency of being child abuser toward their children. Parent’s depressions is significantly affecting their behaviour towards their children.

Another previous study that supported this study was from Rodriguez (2010) who studied on parenting style, the factors which affect parenting and discipline, and parental high tendency toward strong discipline and child abuse behaviour at home. Physical abuse and levels of early social support are associated with adult risk for child physical abuse (Crouch, Milner & Thomsen, 2014). The study

focused on the general population of adults as the respondents. The results of the study indicated that the adult risk for child physical abuse was associated with lower levels of perceived early social support and level of depression.

This research is significant to highlight the depression and child abuse potential among parents. The parents who obtained high score on depression were significantly having higher score on child abuse potential inventory. This study highlighted that to reduce child abuse mental health practitioners needs to work on parental mental health.

IMPLICATION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the findings of this study, it would be helpful for the parents to manage their depression level to reduce the tendency of their verbal and physical abuse toward their children. For healthy children development, there is a significant need for parental education and awareness toward psychological health issues.

This study need further explorations in this area from wider sample size to find more significant results to prepare a healthy parental guideline to handle children. Parental attitude is a wide area to research on healthy parents and child interaction.

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