

Survey of Exposure to Violence in Children

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Received Date: January 14, 2025; **Accepted Date:** January 21, 2025; **Published Date:** January 28, 2025

Citation: Alba C. Alfaro, Ramón S. Medina, Martha Chang, Torriente Valle JM, Caridad de Las Mercedes Cumbá Abreu, et al, (2025), Survey of Exposure to Violence in Children, *International Journal of Clinical Nephrology*. 4(1); DOI:10.37579/2834-5142/036

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Abstract

A survey was conducted using an instrument designed and validated for the study of exposure to violence in children with the aim of exploring the variables of physical, psychological, sexual and neglect/abandonment violence in the home, school and community settings. The survey will be filled out anonymously by the children themselves in the 6th Grade of Primary Education. Primary Schools 6th Grade, which includes children without family care, with prior authorization or informed consent from parents and/or guardians.

Key words: children victims of violence; violence in schools towards children; children and violence at home and in the community

Introduction

Nowadays, violence is a phenomenon that is part of everyday human life and age groups such as children and adolescents are not exempt. Ages in which manifestations of violence frequently proliferate, some used by family members to impose their authority, others evident in educational institutions. Among them, bullying and some more subtle ones, which reach us through video games or audiovisual media. It is therefore essential to understand how manifestations or situations of violence manifest themselves at these ages, what their main risk factors are, among other issues, in order to understand the need for prevention from a very early age. Exposure to violence has been broadly defined, including both direct exposures, where an individual is a victim of violence, and indirect exposure, where an individual witnesses such violence. (1) Exposure to violence, in its various forms, has long been considered a potent factor through which children and adolescents learn aggressive behaviors through imitation of aggressive models, direct operant reinforcement of aggressive acts, and vicarious reinforcement through observational learning. (2) This is supported by the numerous studies that have found a positive association between exposure to violence in different contexts (school, neighborhood, home, and television (TV)) and the development of aggressive behaviors in childhood and adolescence. (3) Evidence at the international level indicates that children and adolescents are exposed to various forms of violence, in different ways throughout their lives, in the multiple contexts in which they develop, that is, in the school, community, care institutions and even at home. Since 2006, the World Report on Violence against Children has recommended that United Nations Member

States improve their information and data collection systems in order to identify vulnerable groups, as well as to report and monitor policies to prevent violence against girls, boys and adolescents. (4) Data provided by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) (5) indicate that worldwide, 1 in 2 girls and boys between 2 and 17 years of age suffers some type of violence each year. According to a global review, it is estimated that 58% of girls and boys in Latin America and 61% in North America suffered physical, sexual or emotional abuse in the last year. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reports that violence is one of the most serious problems currently affecting children. In Cuba, despite the efforts made to reduce the incidence of violence, this phenomenon is still not visible in sociodemographic, medical, legal-criminal statistics and, especially, in the perception of the population, which has turned it into a health problem. It is considered that only a small part of the violence suffered by children and adolescents is reported, discussed or officially known. Sexual abuse at these ages is more frequent than is thought and the crime is mostly not reported, which is known as the "circle of silence", in which the father, mother, family and the victims themselves participate. The results of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) carried out by the Directorate of Medical Records and Health Statistics of the Ministry of Public Health (MINSAP) with results related to violent discipline, child marriage and a victimization module. In minors, the use of punishment and violent forms of discipline at home is maintained, 41.6% of children between 1 and 14 years old experienced psychological

aggression and/or physical punishment from their caregivers during the last month. (MICS- 2019). (6) Cuba's mortality statistics for school-aged children reflect a significant number of violent deaths from various causes. Assaults (4 cases) rank 5th among the main causes of death in children aged 1-4 years, intentionally self-inflicted injuries (23 cases) and Assaults (16 cases) rank 4th and 5th respectively in children aged 5-18 years. (7)

All of which motivated the creation of a designed and validated instrument converted into a survey that would allow us to identify the various manifestations of violence to which girls and boys are exposed (physical, psychological, sexual violence and violence due to negligence and/or abandonment) in the home, school and community settings with the aim of outlining strategies for its prevention.

Technique and procedure

The survey will be applied to be filled out anonymously and confidentially with criteria of voluntariness prior to application and with the informed consent of parents and/or guardians. The source of information was the instrument designed and validated for such purposes (Copyright Registration: No. 3010-09-2018).

The survey consists of a question with general data: sex, age and skin color followed by 5 questions.

Question 1: Manifestations of physical, psychological, sexual violence and neglect and/or abandonment at home and their frequency.

Question 2: Manifestations of physical and psychological violence at school, their frequency and by whom.

Question 3: Questions related to sexual intentions in any place, frequency and by whom or by whom.

Question 4: Witnesses or observation of violent behavior according to frequency and location.

Question 5: Use of new technologies. When they are used and what they are used for. The survey applied in different pilot projects has demonstrated its usefulness for which it was conceived.

The survey:

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