

The prevalence of child sexual abuse among secondary school pupils in Gweru, Zimbabwe

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Abstract

Child sexual abuse is a social and public health concern locally and worldwide because it is associated with numerous and serious short-and long-term devastating consequences. This study investigated the prevalence of child sexual abuse among day secondary school pupils in Gweru, Zimbabwe. The sample comprised 268 secondary pupils (50% female; mean age=15.42, standard deviation=1.376). Data were collected by administering the Child Abuse Screening Tool Children's Version (ICAST-C). The study found an overall prevalence rate of 56.3%, with no significant gender differences. Both non-contact and contact forms of sexual abuse were prevalent. Both adults and peers were reported as perpetrators. Perpetrators were reported to be familiar people, which is consistent with the observation that the home was reported as the major place where abuse was perpetrated. Compared to western studies, this study showed higher rates for the various forms of child sexual abuse.