

A Descriptive study of child abuse cases in the paediatric emergency department (tertiary care hospital in Karachi)

Hareem Ayub^{1*}

1. Children's Health Ireland Crumlin, Ireland

Correspondence to: Hareem Ayub

* Children's Health Ireland Crumlin, Ireland

Email: hareemayub2@gmail.com

DOI: 10.24911/SJEMed.72-1709922852



Background:

Child abuse is an alarming issue that leads to lifelong health consequences, both physically and psychologically. The past few years, an increased number of abuse cases (sexual and physical) were reported in paediatric emergency departments (PED). Knowing the commonly presented abuse and other vital factors (age and gender), prompt effective measures can be developed by the system for child safety.

Objective:

To determine the number of child abuse cases along with the age and gender commonly presenting in the PED.

Methods:

Retrospective review of abuse cases that required in-patient care in PED of ChildLife foundation Karachi, during the period of January'2021-June'2022.

Results:

Total of 39 child abuse cases were reported. 25 were sexual-abuse, out of which 16 were male (64%) and 9 (36%) were female. From age 1month-5years, 37.50% (n=3) were female and 62.50% (n=5) were males. From age 6-10years, 70% (n=7) were male and 30% were female. Lastly, from age 11-13years, 85.70% (n=6) were male and 14.20% (n=1) were females.

14 cases were physical-abuse. 11 (78.5%) were male and 3 (21.4%) were female. From age 1 month-5years, 100% (n=1) were male and 0% (n=0) were female. From age 6-10years, 66.60% (n=4) were male and 33.60% (n=2) were female. Finally, from age 11-13years, 85.70% (n=6) were male and 14.20% (n=1) were female.

44% of sexual-abuse cases left against medical advice (LAMA), 32% got admitted, 20% were discharged and 4% referred to another hospital.

Similarly, from the 14 physical-abuse cases, 28.57% LAMA, 57% got discharged, 7% was admitted and 7% were discharged on request.

Conclusion:

Common abuse in PED was sexual, majority of the patients were males aged 6-10years. Most of physical-abuse cases were of age 11-13years. The result reflects that most of the sexual-abuse cases LAMA while the physical-abuse patients were discharged after treatment.

Prompt and effective measures should be taken by the government to raise awareness and remove the stigma regarding child abuse, so that timely reporting of cases along with early management can be achieved.