

## DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 458 495

CG 031 370

AUTHOR Mousavi, Mahnaz Nowroozi; Rogers, James R.  
TITLE Child Abuse and Depression in Iranian Students: An Empirical Investigation.  
PUB DATE 2001-08-00  
NOTE 10p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American Psychological Association (109th, San Francisco, CA, August 24-28, 2001).  
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)  
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.  
DESCRIPTORS \*Child Abuse; Child Neglect; Depression (Psychology); Family Relationship; \*Family Violence; Foreign Countries; High School Students; High Schools; Political Influences; Rating Scales; Sexual Abuse  
IDENTIFIERS \*Iran (Tehran)

## ABSTRACT

Child abuse and neglect (CA&N), as a social and psychological phenomenon, represents a major area of concern internationally. This study examined the prevalence and self-reported effects of CA&N in Iran through a descriptive investigation of high school students' experiences. A sample consisting of 2,240 high school students representing 5 geographical areas of Tehran completed the Child Abuse and Neglect Questionnaire and the short form of the Beck Depression Inventory. Preliminary analyses indicated that 24% of the sample was subjected to some form of physical abuse, while 34% reported past physical abuse experiences. Overall, 43% of the participants reported they had been battered at least once in their lives. The high rate of physical abuse was followed by emotional abuse (23%), neglect (15.5%), and sexual abuse (4.7%) in the sample. The results suggest that child abuse may be a significant social problem in Iran, but one that is not openly acknowledged as a function of the sociopolitical climate.  
(Author/JDM)

ED 458 495

Running Head: CHILD ABUSE AND DEPRESSION

Child Abuse and Depression in Iranian Students:

An Empirical Investigation

Mahnaz Nowroozi Mousavi

and

James R. Rogers

The University of Akron

**BEST COPY AVAILABLE**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Office of Educational Research and Improvement  
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION  
CENTER (ERIC)

- This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS  
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

M. MOUSAVI

J. ROGERS

2

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES  
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Abstract

Child abuse and neglect (CA&N) as a social and psychological phenomenon, represents a major area of concern internationally. The purpose of the current study was to investigate the prevalence and self-reported effects of CA&N in Iran through a descriptive investigation of high school students' experiences. The sample consisted of 2240 high school students ranging in age from 14 to 18 years, representing the 21 educational districts and 5 geographical areas of Tehran. Research measures included the Child Abuse and neglect Questionnaire and the short form of the Beck Depression Inventory. Preliminary analyses indicate that 24% of the sample was currently being subjected to some form of physical abuse, while 34% reported past physical abuse experiences. Overall, 43% of the participants reported they had been battered at least once in their lives. This high rate of physical abuse was followed by emotional abuse (23%), neglect (15.5%), and sexual abuse (4.7%) in our sample. The correlation of emotional abuse with the total BDI-SF score was small, but statistically significant ( $r = .068$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $N = 2117$ ). Our results suggest that child abuse may be a significant social problem in Iran, but one that is not openly acknowledged as a function of the sociopolitical climate.

Child Abuse and Depression in Iranian Students:

An Empirical Investigation

Introduction

Child abuse and neglect (CA&N) as a social and psychological phenomenon, represents a major area of concern in the United States and internationally. In the U.S. alone, the prevalence rate of CA&N has been estimated to be 12.9 per 1,000 children (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2000a). Internationally, the World Health Organization (WHO) has estimated that approximately 40,000,000 children worldwide are victims of CA&N (World Health Organization, 1999). Despite a multinational commitment to reduce the incidence and prevalence of CA&N through the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (American Psychological Association, 1991), for many countries, research into the extent and effect of CA&N continues to be neglected. Reasons suggested for this neglect include the presence of a sociopolitical and religious climate that inhibits open inquiry in this area.

One country in particular for which this seems to be a viable explanation, is Iran. With the exception of a few studies (e.g., Mohammad-Khani, 1999; Rashidyfar, 1997), inquiry with regard to CA&N in Iran has been relatively nonexistent. The purpose of the current study, therefore, was to investigate the prevalence and self-reported effects of CA&N in Iran through a descriptive investigation of high school students' experiences.

Method

Participants: The sample consisted of 2240 high school students ranging in age from 14 to 18 years. Of the sample, 52.5% were girls and 95% identified their religious affiliation as Muslim. The majority of the students (94%) were living at

home with both biological parents at the time of the study with the remaining students living with a single parent or in foster care. Thirty high schools, representing the 21 educational districts and 5 geographical areas of Tehran, provided access to student participants. Additionally, efforts were made to acquire a sample proportional to the general population in terms of gender, SES, culture, and religious affiliation. Classes within schools were randomly selected and the research instruments were administered in the group settings.

Measures: Research measures included the Child Abuse and Neglect Questionnaire (CANQ) and the short form of the Beck Depression Inventory (Beck & Beck, 1972). The CANQ, written in Persian, was developed by the first author to be used specifically with Iranian students. The CANQ consists of 15 demographic items and 18 items specifically investigating abuse-related experiences. Imbedded in the CANQ are items related to the following definitions of abuse:

Physical Abuse: Physical maltreatment or inflicting any physical harm including slapping, shoving, kicking, burning, biting, and flogging.

Emotional or Psychological Abuse: Causing any intensive psychological or emotional trauma through severe verbal threats, humiliation, age-inappropriate expectations, exposure to disgusting scenes (e.g. parental physical fight) to the extent that jeopardizes the child's mental health and emotions.

Sexual Abuse: Any Sexual contact with the child for sexual gratification of the perpetrator, including molestation, assault with or without violence, any oral, anal or vaginal intercourse, rape, and incest.

Neglect: Hidden forms of physical and psychological maltreatment

including extreme lack of love and care, malnutrition, and lack of necessary medical care.

The Persian translation of the short form of the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI-SF) has a history of use in clinical work in Iran, thus supporting its use in the current study.

### Results

Preliminary analyses indicate that 24% of the sample was currently being subjected to some form of physical abuse, while 34% reported past physical abuse experiences. Overall, 43% of the participants reported they had been battered at least once in their lives. Slapping was the most common reported type of battering (43%) and 23% of the sample reported at least one type of emotional abuse. Finally, 4.7% reported at least one incidence of being sexually abused and 15.5% reported being neglected.

Overall, 23% of reported abusers were identified as immediate family members, 31% as other relatives, 16% as acquaintances, and 31% as strangers. Neglect by biological parents was 23%. Report of neglect and sexual and emotional abuse was significantly higher for girls than boys ( $t=96.74$ ,  $p<.001$ ;  $t=18.87$ ,  $p<.001$  respectively). However, there was no significant gender difference in reporting physical abuse. Students living with a single parent reported higher neglect than those in other living situations ( $F=6.47$ ,  $df=5$ ,  $2031$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Report of physical abuse was significantly related to poverty as indicated by low income ( $F=8.87$ ,  $df=4$ ,  $2032$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and residency in the southern region of Tehran ( $F=6.15$ ,  $df=4$ ,  $2032$ ,  $p<.001$ ).

Finally, the total mean score on the BDI-SF was 7.65 with 41% of the sample scoring above the mean. The correlation of emotional abuse with the total

BDI-SF score was small, but statistically significant ( $r = .068$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $N = 2117$ ). Significant correlations were not found for the other types of abuse or neglect.

#### Discussion

In our survey of CA&N and depression in Iranian high school students, the most reported type of abuse was physical abuse (43%). This compares favorably with Mohammad Khani (1999) and Rashydidfar (1997) who reported a similar rate of approximately 50% for Iranian students. This high rate of physical abuse was followed by emotional abuse (23%), neglect (15.5%), and sexual abuse (4.7%) in our sample. Also supporting prior research (e.g., Mohammad Khani, 1999; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2000b; Ludwig & Kornberg, 1992), there was a strong relationship in our data between physical abuse and socioeconomic status. Finally, the small correlation between emotional abuse and depression was a somewhat surprising result. Clearly, the statistical significance of that coefficient is a function of statistical power and the clinical or practical value of the observed relationship is questionable. It could be that the negative psychological impact of emotional abuse often observed in western research in this area has strong cultural underpinnings. If the relationship between abuse and depression observed in the current research holds under replication, future researchers will need to consider the cross-cultural and research design implications of this finding.

In summary, our results suggest that child abuse may be a significant social problem in Iran, but one that is not openly acknowledged as a function of the sociopolitical climate. Until governmentally sanctioned epidemiological studies are undertaken in Iran to investigate the incidence and prevalence of CA&N, it is unlikely that it will act on its documented commitment to the 1989 United Nations

Convention on the Rights of the Child (American Psychological Association, 1991).

Reference

- Beck, A.T. & Beck, R.W. (1972). Screening depressed patients in family practice: A rapid technique. Postgraduate Medicine, 52, 81-85.
- American Psychological Association (1991). UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: Unofficial summary of articles, American Psychologist, 46, 50-52.  
<http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2001pres/20010402.html>
- Ludwig, S. & Kornberg, A.E (Eds.) (1992). Child abuse: A medical Reference (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Churchill Livingstone.
- Mohammad-Khani, P. (1999). Barrasye Vazeeate Koodad-Azari dar Danesh-Amoozane Pesare Payeh Dovom Maghtae Rahnamaee Share Tehran [A Survey on Child Abuse in Tehranian Middle School Boys]. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Alamme Tabatabaee University, Department of Psychology and Pedagogy, Tehran, Iran.
- Rasheedy Far, N. (1997). Barasye Rabeteh bayne Avamele Jameeat Shenakhty va Veezhegeehaye Shakhseeiyati ba Koodak-Azari va Beetavajohee dar Gorrohee az Nojavanane Share Ahar [Relationship between Demographic Factors and Personality Characteristics with Child abuse and Neglect among adolescents in Ahar city]. Unpublished master thesis, Iran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran Institute of Psychiatry, Tehran, Iran.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2000, April). HHS Reports New Child Abuse and Neglect Statistics. Available on-line:  
<http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2000pres/20000410.html>.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2000, April). Child Maltreatment 1998: Reports from the Statistics to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System. Washington, DC: US: Government Printing Office.

Available on-line: <http://www.calib.com/nccanch/prevmnth/stats.html>.

World Health Organization (1999, April). WHO Recognizes Child Abuse as a Major Public Health Problem. Available on-line: <http://www.who.int/inf-pr-1999/en/pr99-20.html>.



U.S. Department of Education  
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)  
National Library of Education (NLE)  
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)



# REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

## I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: <i>CHILD ABUSE AND DEPRESSION IN IRANIAN STUDENTS: AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION</i>	
Author(s): <i>MAHNAZ NOWROOZI MOUSAVI &amp; JAMES R. ROGERS</i>	
Corporate Source: <i>THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON</i>	Publication Date: <i>AUGUST 2001 (APA poster presentation)</i>

## II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to each document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified documents, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

<p>The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY</p> <p><i>MAHNAZ MOUSAVI</i> <i>James R. Rogers</i></p> <p>TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)</p> </div> <p>1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Level 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) and paper copy.</p>	<p>The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)</p> </div> <p>2A</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Level 2A <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only</p>	<p>The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)</p> </div> <p>2B</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Level 2B <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only</p>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits. If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate these documents as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Signature: <i>Mahnaz Mousavi</i>	Printed Name/Position/Title: <i>MAHNAZ N. MOUSAVI/Doc student/M.S.</i>	
Organization/Address: <i>THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON, 127 Carrol Hall, AKRON, OH 44325-5007</i>	Telephone: <i>(330)375-1820</i>	FAX:
	E-Mail Address: <i>Mahnaz@uakron.edu</i>	Date: <i>12/5/01</i>

Sign here, → please

APA '01

ERIC  
Note: My First Name was misspelled in APA convention directory

### III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of these documents from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of these documents. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

### IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

### V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse: **ERIC Counseling & Student Services  
University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
201 Ferguson Building  
PO Box 26171  
Greensboro, NC 27402-6171**