

Adverse effect of Abuse During Childhood on Criminal Behavior and Type of Crime among Prisoners at Forensic Mental Health Department

Hadeel S. Ali^{1*}, Saja H. Mohammed²

¹PhD Student, Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing, College of Nursing, University of Babylon

²Prof., Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing, College of Nursing, Al Bayan University

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ABSTRACT

A quantitative approach using a descriptive-analysis design was used in the present study to find out the impact of child abuse on criminal behavior among prisoners in the forensic department. The period of the study was from 16th of October 2023 to 10th of June 2024. The study has been conducted at Al-Rashad Training Hospital which is located in of Baghdad City. Non-probability sampling techniques in which prisoners are selected because they have characteristics that we need in our sample. In other words, prisoners are selected "on purpose" as purposive sampling. Also the judgmental sampling, this sampling method relies on our judgment when identifying and selecting the prisoners that can provide the best information to achieve the study's objectives. We choose purposive sampling because the researcher wants to focus in-depth on relatively small samples. A purposive sample of (110) prisoners was selected from Al-Rashad Training Hospital. The study sample in this research was selected from prisoners in the forensic department in the hospital. Results: Prisoners have moderate to high level of psychological abuse during childhood. They have moderate to high level of physical abuse during childhood. prisoners having moderate to high level of sexual abuse during childhood. Also they have moderate to high level of neglect during childhood. As overall prisoners have high level of abuse during childhood. prisoners having moderate to high level of criminal behavior subdomain (socialization). related to criminal behavior subdomain (Social conditions) among prisoners; the findings indicates that prisoners having moderate to high level of criminal behavior subdomain (Social conditions) among items. The findings indicates that prisoners having moderate to high level of criminal behavior subdomain (Personal and psychological circumstances) among items. Prisoners have high level of criminal behavior as overall. There is high significant relationship between Abuse during childhood and Criminal behavior at p-value= .004. There are significant relationships between (psychological, physical, sexual abuse) during childhood and criminal behavior at p-value= 0.05. There are no significant relationships between neglect during childhood and criminal behavior. There is no significant relationship between Abuse during childhood and type of crime at p-value= .05.

1. Introduction

The concept of childhood is a social construct that has been viewed differently in every society, Early childhood is the most important and influential life phase in personality of the child. the social and cultural problems facing the construction of childhood affect the development of child, where the child is exposed to abuse in childhood, which creates fear and violent, dangerous, or life- threatening , different experiences that can lead to trauma Unfortunately, this is all too common and any disorder in the early growth process often leading to disorder in subsequent process of growth and development stages, from infancy to adolescence, young people who experience maltreatment are at significant risk of physical health, mental health, behavioral, educational, and vocational challenges

Physical abuse is involving physical punishment and aggression, Emotional abuse, also called psychological abuse, can be defined as abuse related to lack of care by the caregiver, causing the child to lack support. Regarding negligence, this has been divided into two categories: physical, understood as a lack of attention to the basic needs of minors; and the psychological, more related to the lack of attention to emotional needs, there are some basic relationships between the two phenomena. It has been observed that children physically and/or emotionally assaulted would be more prone to commit aggressive criminal acts, and that children who suffered from neglect would be more likely to commit crimes against property. In addition, it has been pointed out that a significant percentage of the criminal population has a history of violence in childhood. widely studied as a consequence of abuse and neglect, aggressive and criminal behaviors are consistently associated with maltreatment in childhood. childhood maltreatment has pronounced negative effects on mental health. It leads to disruptions in interpersonal relationships and psychological problems, including low self-efficacy, lack of positive task orientation,

and social information processing deficits and it interferes with the development of emotional self-regulation. It is not surprising that child maltreatment has also been linked to a variety of psychiatric disorders and mental-health problems in adulthood, such as suicidality, depression, substance abuse, psychotic disorders, and the perpetration of violence .and may increase the likelihood that an individual will commit criminal acts in adulthood (The potential influence of criminological rationales in considering childhood abuse as mitigating to sentencing, child maltreatment increases the risk of violent and criminal behavior later in life an intergenerational transmission pattern referred to as the “cycle of violence”. Child victimization also increases the probability of the entire array of mental health problems, including personality disorders, psychosis, and schizophrenia as well as substance abuse that are prevalent among forensic mental health inpatients. In people with severe mental disorders, those exposed to the most extensive child maltreatment have an increased propensity of later being violent toward other people, mirroring the association found in the general population.

2. Materials and Methods

Study design

A cross-sectional descriptive study.

Study setting

Present study carried out at Al-Rashad Training Hospital which is located in Baghdad City, in the forensic medicine department.

Study sampling

The study population consists of 150 prisoners in the forensic medicine department. All prisoners in the study population Were selected 124 of the sample have met the study criteria and they agree to participate in the study. Also, another (4) prisoners were excluded because they didn't fill out all the questionnaire domains. A pilot study is conducted on (10) prisoners who are selected purposively from the Al-Rashad Training Hospital in Baghdad City. The sample of the pilot study is excluded from the original study. Finally, the sample included in the present study is (110) participants. The sample is divided into two groups; (77) participants who were male prisoners from the forensic medicine hall and (33) participants who were female prisoners from other halls in the hospital.

Instrument of study

The tool consists of three parts:

Part I

The first part is concerned with prisoners' socio-demographic characteristics which include {sex, age, Sequence of the prisoner in the family, number of brothers and sisters, Education level, marital status, monthly income, Family history of psychological disorder, Substance abuse type of crime, medical diagnosis and alcohol drinking}.

Part II

The second part is concerned with abuse during childhood among prisoners. The scale includes 38 items divided into four domains {psychological abuse (14 items), physical abuse (8 items), sexual abuse (5 items), and neglect (11)}.

Part III

The third part is concerned with prisoners' criminal behavior scale which includes 34 items divided into three domains {Socialization Domain (10 items), social conditions domain (10 items), and personal and psychological circumstances domain (14 items)}.Based on the mean of score and rated into four levels also as follows: no child abuse= 0– 0.74, mild= 0.75 – 01. 49, moderate= 1.50 – 2. 24 and Good= 2.25 –3.

Ethical Approval

Informed consent from each participant of the study sample was obtained and the participation was confidential and voluntary, the information was for research purposes only

The purpose and the benefits of the study were explained by the researcher. After they agreed to participate in the study, Anonymous questionnaire was handed to them to maintain a complete confidentiality for the participants. The study protocol appraised and approved by nursing collage domestic committee, theme information, and permission form (June 13, 2023).

3. Results and Discussion

The results of the data analysis presented systematically in tables and are in accordance to selected study objectives:

Table 1. Distribution of participants according to their Socio-demographic Characteristics

List	Characteristics		f	%
1	Sex	Male	77	70
		Female	33	30
		Total	110	100
2	Age	20-30	44	40
		30-40	50	45.5
		40-50	7	6.4
		50-60	5	4.5
		60 and more	4	3.6
		Total	110	100
3	Sequence of the prisoner in the family	First	15	13.6
		Second	20	18.2
		Third	32	29.1
		Fourth	27	24.53
		Fifth	8	7.3
		Six	5	4.54
		Seven	3	2.73
4	No brothers or sisters	Total	110	100
		Zero	6	5.45
		One	24	21.82
		Two	29	26.37
		Three	19	17.27
		Fourth	15	13.64
		Five	17	15.45
5	Educational levels	Total	110	100
		Read and write	33	30
		Primary school	40	36.36
		Secondary school	30	27.27
		Graduated	6	5.46
		Post graduated	1	0.91
6	Marital Status	Total	110	100
		Single	20	18
		Married	11	1
		Divorce	58	49
		Separate	10	9
		Widow	27	14
7	Type of Crime	Killing	60	54.55

		Rape	20	18.18
		Theft	3	2.73
		Terrorism	27	24.54
		Total	110	100
8	Medical Diagnosis	Psychosis	77	70
		Obsessive-compulsive	2	1.8
		Bipolar disorder	2	1.8
		depression	22	20
		Addiction	7	6.4
		Total	110	100
9	Family history of psychological disorder	Yes	52	47.27
		No	58	52.73
		Total	110	100
10	Substance abuse	Yes	60	54.5
		No	50	45.5
		Total	110	100
11	Drink alcohol	Yes	55	50
		No	55	50
		Total	110	100

F: Frequency, %: Percentage

The findings in the table shows that about two third of prisoners were males (70%) and remaining were are females. The age group among prisoners 45.5% of them were seen with the age group of 30-40 years. Regarding the sequence of the prisoner in the family, the highest percentage among prisoners refers to being third child in family as reported among 29.1% of them. Also, 26.37% of them have two brothers and sister. 36.36% of prisoners have finished the primary school according the level of education. The marital status of those prisoners reveals that 49% of them are divorced. Most of the sample of the study was detained in prison with killing as a type of crime 54.55 %. Also 70% of them with medical diagnosisThe family history of psychological disorders among prisoners reveals that 47.27% have family member with psychological disorders. Additionally, 54.5% of prisoners under substance abuse and 50% of them drinking alcohol.

Table (2): Overall Evaluation of Abuse during childhood

Knowledge	f	%	M	SD	Evaluation
Mild	4	3.636363636	89.24	3.393	High
Moderate	33	30			
High	73	66.36363636			
Total	110	100			

f: Frequency, %: Percentage

M: Mean for total score, SD: Standard Deviation for total score

No child abuse= 0 – 28.4, Mild = 28.5 – 56.9, Moderate = 57 – 85.4, High= 85.5-114

This table reveals that prisoners have high level Abuse during childhood.

Table 3. Evaluation of criminal behavior subdomain (socialization).

No	Socialization Domain	M	S.D	Level
1.	I need a lot of money	2.78	.86450	H
2.	I'm looking for levels beyond my ability.	2.74	.78807	H
3.	I haven't a job. or work	2.52	.87509	H
4.	Too much debt and its accumulation as a result of non-work.	2.62	.68633	H
5.	High prices and a large number of life requirements	2.74	.75915	H
6.	My inability to meet the needs of my family	2.60	.85224	H
7.	I'm poor	2.72	.91191	H
8.	I notice the financial condition of the person I want to steal	2.66	.73270	H
9.	I like to own other people's things.	2.64	.94451	H
10.	I fight with people who try to mock me	2.60	.52315	H
Total		26.62	.93654	H

F: Frequency, %: Percentage, MS: Mean of score, SD Standard deviation

This table presents the items related to criminal behavior subdomain (socialization) among prisoners; the findings indicates that prisoners having moderate to high level of criminal behavior subdomain (socialization)among items.

Table 4. Evaluation of criminal behavior subdomain (Social conditions).

No	Social Conditions Domain	M	S.D	Level
1.	Circumstances of parental separation.	1.66	.44721	L
2.	Absence of the Guardian.	1.98	.73270	M
3.	Instability of parents in one place.	1.45	.48936	L
4.	A lot of domestic problems	2.86	.73270	H
5.	I haven't self-actualization	2.45	.22361	H
6.	Completely unable to provide housing for my family.	2.56	.44721	H
7.	Growing up in an environment has not been given full rights.	2.45	.30779	H
8.	I plan my projects alone without interference from anyone	2.34	.22361	H
9.	I was being beaten by others before I entered the center.	2.48	.30779	H
10.	I was forced to do things I didn't want	2.87	.44721	H
Total		23.1	.58564	M

F: Frequency, %: Percentage, MS: Mean of score, SD Standard deviation

This table presents the items related to criminal behavior subdomain (Social conditions) among prisoners; the findings indicates that prisoners having moderate to high level of criminal behavior subdomain (Social conditions) among items.

Table 5. Evaluation of criminal behavior subdomain (Personal and psychological circumstances).

No	Personal and psychological circumstances Domain	M	S.D	Level
1.	Sense of aggression.	2.47	.51042	H
2.	Inability to resist bad deeds in me.	2.65	.48936	H
3.	I'm not valuable among others.	2.14	.47016	M
4.	I don't blame myself for misbehaving.	2.22	.36635	M

5.	I have sexual practices at an early age With adults.	2.88	.51042	H
6.	I feel hopeless at not being able to find solutions to my problems.	2.34	.48936	H
7.	Desire and a sense of revenge.	2.54	.30779	H
8.	I have a sense of persecution by others.	2.65	.41039	H
9.	Sensation of weakness at an early age.	2.41	.41039	H
10.	Feeling happy when disagreeing with others	2.58	.48936	H
11.	I want to stay with my bad friends.	2.64	.22361	
12.	This is a motive to assault the property of others	2.34	.48936	H
13.	I don't understand what to do when I get into a fight	2.48	.44426	H
14.	I don't think about the consequences when I get into trouble	2.57	.36635	H
Total		34.91	.49561	H

F: Frequency, %: Percentage, MS: Mean of score, SD Standard deviation

This table presents the items related to criminal behavior subdomain (Personal and psychological circumstances) among prisoners; the findings indicates that prisoners having moderate to high level of criminal behavior subdomain (Personal and psychological circumstances) among items.

Table (6): Overall Evaluation of Criminal behavior

Criminal behavior	f	%	M	SD	Evaluation
Mild	2	1.818181818	84.63	2.64587	High
Moderate	21	19.09090909			
High	87	79.09090909			
Total	110	100			

f: Frequency, %: Percentage

M: Mean for total score, SD: Standard Deviation for total score

This table reveals that prisoners have high level of criminal behavior.

Table (7): Correlation between Abuse during childhood and Criminal behavior among Prisoners

Correlation		Abuse childhood	during	Criminal behavior
Abuse during childhood	Pearson Correlation	1		.923
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.004*
	N	110		110
Criminal behavior	Pearson Correlation	.923		1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004*		

N	110	110
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*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

This table indicates that there is high significant relationship between Abuse during childhood and Criminal behavior at p-value= .004.

Table 8. Association between Abuse during childhood subdomain and criminal behavior

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
psychological * Criminal behavior	Between Groups (Combined)	1.306	4	.327	1.334	.0474
	Within Groups	11.014	105	.245		
	Total	12.320	109			
Physical abuse * Criminal behavior	Between Groups (Combined)	7.199	4	1.800	3.603	.0222
	Within Groups	22.481	105	.500		
	Total	29.680	109			
Sexual abuse* Criminal behavior	Between Groups (Combined)	2.482	4	.621	.416	.0145
	Within Groups	67.198	105	1.493		
	Total	69.680	109			
Neglect Criminal behavior	Between Groups (Combined)	1.463	4	.366	.416	.0645
	* Within Groups	35.215	105	1.245		
	Total	42.458	109			

This table reveals that there are significant relationships between (psychological, physical, sexual abuse) during childhood and criminal behavior at p-value= 0.05. There are no significant relationships between neglect during childhood and criminal behavior.

Table 9. Association between Abuse during childhood and type of crime

Correlation	Abuse during childhood	Type of crime
Abuse during childhood	Pearson Correlation 1	.548

Type of crime	Sig. (2-tailed)		.059
	N	110	110
	Pearson Correlation	.548	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.059	
	N	110	110

This table indicates that there is no significant relationship between Abuse during childhood and type of crime at p-value= .05.

Table 10. Association between Diagnosis and Type of Crime

Correlation		Diagnosis	Type of crime
Diagnosis	Pearson Correlation	1	.214
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.0621
	N	110	110
Type of crime	Pearson Correlation	.214	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.0621	
	N	110	110

This table indicates that there is no significant relationship between Abuse during childhood and type of crime at p-value= .05.

Table 11. Association between Abuse during childhood and their Sociodemographic Data among prisoners

List	Abuse during childhood Socio-demographic data	Relationship	Association Sig.
1.	Sex	$r^* = .022$ P-value= .92	N.S.
2.	Age	$r_s = .011$ P-value= .992	N.S.
3.	Sequence of the prisoner in the family	$r_s = .29$ P-value= .150	N.S.
4.	Number of brothers	$r_s = .091$ P-value= .502	N.S.
5.	Number of sisters	$r_s = .087$	N.S.

		P-value= .402	
6.	Educational level	$r_s = -.985$ P-value= .002	S.
7.	Marital status	$r_s = .157$ P-value= .487	N.S.
8.	Monthly income	$r_s = .478$ P-value= .785	N.S.
9.	Family history of psychological disorder	$r_s = .874$ P-value= .423	N.S.
10.	Substance abuse	$r_s = .254$ P-value= .411	N.S.
11.	Drinking alcohol	$r_s = .698$ P-value= .321	N.S.

r_s = Spearman correlation coefficient, r^* = point biserial correlation coefficient, P= Probability, Sig= Significance, N.S= Not significant, S= Significant, H.S= High significant. This table reveals that there are no significant relationships between Abuse during childhood and Sociodemographic Data at p-value= 0.05. There are reverse significant relationships between Abuse during childhood and educational level among prisoners.

Table 12. Association between Abuse during childhood and their Sociodemographic Data among prisoners

List	Criminal behavior Socio- demographic data	Relationship	Association Sig.
12.	Sex	$r^* = .036$ P-value= .652	N.S.
13.	Age	$r_s = .147$ P-value= .658	N.S.
14.	Sequence of the prisoner in the family	$r_s = .45$ P-value= .584	N.S.
15.	Number of brothers	$r_s = .104$ P-value= .054	N.S.
16.	Number of sisters	$r_s = .104$ P-value= .651	N.S.
17.	Educational level	$r_s = -.854$ P-value= .92	S.
18.	Marital status	$r_s = .245$ P-value= .84	N.S.
19.	Monthly income	$r_s = .404$ P-value= .546	N.S.
20.	Family history of psychological disorder	$r_s = .447$ P-value= .542	N.S.
21.	Substance abuse	$r_s = .982$ P-value= .008	S.

22.	Drinking alcohol	$r_s = .452$ P-value= .087	N.S.
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r_s = Spearman correlation coefficient, r^* = point biserial correlation coefficient, P= Probability, Sig= Significance, N.S= Not significant, S= Significant, H.S= High significant

This table reveals that there are no significant relationships between Criminal behavior and Sociodemographic Data at p-value= 0.05. There are significant relationships between Criminal behavior and Substance abuse among prisoners.

The results of the current study showed in Table (1) The findings in the table show that about two third of prisoners are males (70%) and the remaining are females. This agrees with Graf et al. (2021) study to synthesize epidemiological evidence for the association between ACEs and justice system contact. As a demographic date more than half of sample were male (61%). The age group among prisoners 45.5% of them are seen with the age group of 30-40 years. This agree with Kazeem (2020) in the study aim to investigated the influence of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and socio-economic status (SES) on criminal behavior. He stated that the participants' age ranged between 20 and 53 years with a mean age of 30 years (± 9.7).

Exactly, 36.36% of prisoners have finished the primary school according the level of education. This result is constant with Canturk et al. (2021). It is known that the negative impact of childhood traumas on the mental health of the individual is significant and leads to the emergence of many psychiatric conditions. The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between childhood trauma, violence tendency, and crime among male prisoners and inmates in prison. The majority (40.3%) of prisoners and inmates who were participants in this study are primary school graduates.

The marital status of those prisoners reveals that 49% of them are divorced. This result is constant with Canturk et al. (2021). It is known that the negative impact of childhood traumas on the mental health of the individual is significant and leads to the emergence of many psychiatric conditions. This study aimed to determine the relationship between childhood trauma, violence tendency, and crime among male prisoners and inmates in prison. It was seen that the total scores of emotional abuse and childhood traumas were significantly higher in divorced prisoners than other groups.

Additionally, 54.5% of prisoners under substance abuse and 50% of them drinking alcohol. These results agree with a study by Basto et al (2023) who examined the relationship between ACEs and criminal behaviors in young adults living in 10 countries located across five continents, after accounting for sex, age, and cross-national differences. The majority of the sample were addicted to drugs without legal prescription. The results of the current study showed in Table (2) This table presents the items related to psychological abuse during childhood among prisoners; the findings indicates that prisoners having moderate to high level of psychological abuse during childhood among items. Our study agrees with Fang et al. (2020) examined whether callous-unemotional (CU) traits mediated the relationship between childhood psychological maltreatment and moral disengagement, and whether this mediating process was moderated by empathy. They examined whether callous-unemotional (CU) traits mediated the relationship between childhood psychological maltreatment and moral disengagement and whether this mediating process was moderated by empathy. They reveal that there are high levels of psychological maltreatment and moral disengagement among the participants.

The results of the current study showed in Table (3) This table presents the items related to physical abuse during childhood prisoners; the findings indicates that prisoners having moderate to high level of physical abuse during childhood among items. This result costant with Lansford et al, (2021) in study hypothesized that early childhood physical abuse would prospectively predict adult outcomes in education and economic stability, physical health, mental health, substance use, and criminal behavior. The participants in this study present with high physical abuse levels in order to find the adulthood outcome.

The results of the current study showed in Table (4) This table presents the items related to sexual abuse during childhood among prisoners; the findings indicates that prisoners having moderate to high level of sexual abuse during childhood among items. This result is strikingly similar to those by Reavis et al, (2013), who indicated that the offender group reported nearly four times as many adverse events in childhood than an adult male normative sample. Eight of ten events were found at significantly higher levels among the

criminal population. In addition, convicted sexual offenders and child abusers were more likely to report experiencing sexual abuse in childhood than other offender types.

The results of the current study showed in Table (5) This table presents the items related to neglect during childhood among prisoners; the findings indicates that prisoners having moderate to high level of neglect during childhood among items. This agrees with Graf et al. (2021) study to synthesize epidemiological evidence for the association between ACEs and justice system contact. The participants in this study present high level of neglect during childhood.

The results of the current study showed in Table (6) This table presents the items related to psychological abuse during childhood among prisoners; the findings indicates that prisoners having moderate to high level of psychological abuse during childhood among items. Our study agrees with Fang et al. (2020) examined whether callous-unemotional (CU) traits mediated the relationship between childhood psychological maltreatment and moral disengagement, and whether this mediating process was moderated by empathy. They examined whether callous-unemotional (CU) traits mediated the relationship between childhood psychological maltreatment and moral disengagement and whether this mediating process was moderated by empathy. They reveal that there are high levels of psychological maltreatment and moral disengagement among the participants.

4. Conclusions And Recommendations

The results indicate that about two-thirds of the prisoners are male (70%) and the rest are female.

The age group among prisoners 45.5% of them are seen with the age group of 30-40 years.

The marital status of those prisoners reveals that 49% of them are divorced.

Most of the study sample members were imprisoned in prison with murder as a type of crime at 54.55%. Also, 70% of them have a medical diagnosis

The family history of psychological disorders among prisoners reveals that 47.27% have family member with psychological disorders.

Additionally, 54.5% of prisoners under substance abuse and 50% of them drinking alcohol.

there is high significant relationship between Abuse during childhood and Criminal behavior

As mentioned previously, a traumatized child whose experiences have been left unattended cannot process what happened and the effects of these experiences may appear in adulthood.

Therefore, this study recommends that children who have been exposed to negative experiences should be helped while they are still in the developmental stage and at the appropriate time by qualified specialists in this field. Child and sex-specific programs designed specifically for victims may help mitigate the effects of criminal behavior in adulthood.

This precaution comes as a result of noting the challenges in identifying and evaluating traumatic childhood experiences that led to specific traumas. The factor that must be taken into consideration when developing a treatment or intervention plan is the cultural background of the individual who will be intervened on, and that looking at the individual's culture will be necessary for his recovery.

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