



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Pediatrics

Adolescent Violence : Pointers of Perpetrators

KEY WORDS: Adolescent violence, Perpetrator, Pointer**Anand K. Agarwal**

Professor, Pediatrics, Career Institute of Medical Sciences, IIM Road Lucknow UP 226021.

Ashish Verma

Assistant Prof., Pediatrics, Career Institute of Medical Sciences, IIM Road Lucknow UP 226021.

ABSTRACT

Violence has been declared as a leading public issue. It is an end result of the inter-personal conflict, The violent behavior is influenced by social contexts and the individual attributes brought to these contexts. **Material and method:** A cross-sectional survey was conducted on 960 students aged 10-18 years of urban schools, with two point scale (yes / no) to know the involvement in violence. **Observations:** Present study revealed the prevalence of perpetrators was 36.26% while male and female were 65.52% and 34.48% in their respective groups. 23.68%, 18.42%, 26.31% boys and 20%, 15%, 30% girls as perpetrators were in habit of smoking, alcohol and tobacco use respectively. **Discussion & Conclusion:** Middle class and Upper middle class status, father's education intermediate and illiterate, mother's primary education, nuclear family reflect the inclination towards the violent act. At that very moment the preventive tools can be offered to these adolescents for their own, for the families and of course, for the benefit of the society

Introduction:

Violence has been declared as a leading public issue. WHO defines violence as: "The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development, or deprivation" (1). It is an end result of the inter-personal conflict, when it is not resolved in humanitarian manner. It denies human integrity and leads to hopelessness and helplessness. Rivera defined violence as an abusive or unjust exercise of power (2).

Conflict is the foundation block of violence. It's spectrum ranges from verbal harshness to the cold blooded murder. The violent behavior is influenced by social contexts and the individual attributes brought to these contexts. The degree of offence depends upon the health of perpetrator's mind and it's deviation from the acceptable in the land of law (3). The 'storm and stress' concept of adolescent development, which depicts adolescence as a time of turmoil and angst (anxiety and depression), really derives from 18th and 19th century Romanticism and utilized in the developmental theories of psychoanalysis (4,5).

Adolescent violence is a major threat to the welfare, peace and prosperity of any society. The line of the adolescent violence is growing in a ascending manner on global canvas (3). This is the high time to address the problem.

In view of these facts this study was designed to explore the pointers of perpetrators with special reference of their previous victimization, which can be used to mark them at school level and to segregate them for the intervention.

Material and method:

A cross-sectional survey was conducted by using an anonymous pretested self-report questionnaire. This was administered to 960 students aged 10-18 years of urban schools, which elicited details regarding the indulgence in violence as perpetrator during last one year. The process was done in sensitive and confidential manner. The physical violence done personally over the last one year was measured. The evaluation was performed in one to one basis.

All respondents were stressed at the time of questioning that they should respond 'yes' only in the case of non-play situations. A two point scale (yes / no) was used to know the involvement in violence.

Observations:

Present study revealed the prevalence of perpetrators was 36.26% while male and female were 65.52% and 34.48% in their

respective groups. Table 3 depicts that the middle and upper middle class of nuclear families were involved the most. Intermediate passed fathers of male and illiterate of females produce the highest numbers of perpetrators, while primary educated mothers are responsible in case of females. 45.61% boys staying with both parents and 20% girls staying with relatives were maximally involved as perpetrators. 23.68%, 18.42%, 26.31% boys and 20%, 15%, 30% girls as perpetrators were in habit of smoking, alcohol and tobacco use respectively. 43.85% boys and 26.66% girls were failed in previous examination. 63.15% boys and 55% girls watch TV more than 3 hours daily. The maximum offence was perpetrated at school by boys (60.52%) and in neighborhood by girls (55%). Boys (47.36%) and girls (40%) were victimized previously in one or other incidence.

Discussion & Conclusion:

The prevalence of violence was found 36.26% which is low when compared to 53% found by Cross-Tab Marketing Services & Telecommunications Research Group for Microsoft Corporation (6) and high when compared with 27% Ray Murni (7), 33% national CDC survey (8), 26% Kowalski R M et.al.(9), 13.5% Sharma et.al.(10), 8% to 21% Deb et.al.(11), 32.8% MMWR Surveillance(8) and 15% to 25% adolescent involvement in violence depicted in ziggysblogs (12,13,14). Sharma et.al. reported 49% boys which is on higher side (65.53%) and 39% girls are offenders which is low when compared to our data (10). That can be attributed to the small sample size. WHO reported a steep rise in the homicidal violence, the rates are highest in Latin America [for example, 84.4 per 100 000 in Colombia and 50.2 per 100 000 in El Salvador] and lowest in Japan [0.4 per 100 000] (15).

Middle class and Upper middle class status, father's education intermediate and illiterate, mother's primary education and students who belonged to the nuclear family reflect the inclination towards the violent act due to poor family care and responsiveness as same was found in other studies (16,17,18). Use of alcohol and smoking were low than the results of other studies (10,12,19). Tobacco use has not been reported in literature which is also one of the predictor found in our study. TV watch more than 3 hours per day is an interesting finding which indirectly correlates them in indulgence of violence as also has been advocated by other researchers (20). Academic failure is one of the biggest factor for indulgence in violence, which confirms the reports of Hurt H et.al. and others (12,21). The school was selected by boys while girls did it in neighborhood as the place of assault. A large chunk of perpetrators were victimized previously which strengthened the Serve and return theory of Interaction (22).

The pointers found in this study point a stress on the adolescents,

that reflects their unstable mental state which pushes them to indulge in such offence (23,24). The pointers may guide us to spot the adolescent who may be involved in violence in future at the school level itself. At that very moment the preventive tools can be offered to these adolescents for their own, for the family's and of course, for the benefit of the society (25).

Table:1 Sex distribution: (n=960)

Group	Male	Female	Total
10-14yr	204	156	360
14+-18yr	316	284	600
Total	520	440	960

Table:2 Perpetrators: (n=348)

Group	Male	Female	Total
10-14yr	90	42	132 (37.93%)
14+-18yr	139	78	216 (62.06%)
Total	228 (65.52%)	120 (34.48%)	348 (36.26%)

Table:3 Pointers of Perpetrators: (n=348)

S No	Pointers		Male (n=228)	Female (n=120)
1.	Socio economic condition	Middle class	96 (42.10%)	
		Upper middle class		56 (46.66%)
2.	Father's education	Intermediate	66 (28.94%)	
		Illiterate		48 (40%)
3.	Mother's education	Primary	72 (31.57%)	54 (45%)
4.	Type of family	Nuclear	120 (52.63%)	36 (60%)
5.	Habits	Smoking	54 (23.68%)	24 (20%)
		Alcohol	42 (18.42%)	18 (15%)
		Tobacco use	60 (26.31%)	36 (30%)
6.	Staying with	Both parents	104 (45.61%)	
		Relatives		24 (20%)
7.	Academic performance	Failed	100 (43.85%)	32 (26.66%)
8.	TV watch	More than 3 hrs	144 (63.15%)	66 (55%)
9.	Place of assault	School	138 (60.52%)	
		Neighborhood		66 (55%)
10.	Before assault whether you had been victimized	Yes	108 (47.36%)	48 (40%)
		No	120 (53.57%)	72 (60%)

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