

Knowledge of Child Sexual Abuse Warning Signs among Secondary School Children in Temeke – Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed at assessing the level of warning sign knowledge as the primary prevention measure among secondary school children in Temeke Municipal. Specifically, the study intended to establish the knowledge level of warning signs as well as identifying common and least known warning signs among children. This study was a descriptive in nature which employed a sample size of 175 research subjects. Data was collected through self-administered questionnaire; where the study was carried out in five secondary schools in Temeke. The study findings revealed that children have limited knowledge of warning signs; though, scores among identified warning signs had marginal differences. Further, fear of some people or places, developing lying habit and the knowledge of good, bad and confusing touching were identified by the research subjects as the common warning signs while developing new names of the genital was identified as the least known warning sign among others. Thus, the study recommends for programs geared towards imparting knowledge of warning signs in order to combat incidents of child sexual abuse

Key Word: *Child Sexual Abuse, Warning signs, Primary Prevention, Child Protection*

Background to the Study

Child sexual abuse is one of the oldest form of abuse that has existed for many centuries around the world. Its history can be traced back to 1066 AD; during this time, children were treated as parent's properties. Parents had all powers to decide wherever it pleased them even if it was against the fundamental rights of the child; no one could question such decision. Further, during the same time, children were given or taken for marriage in order to make or maintain peace among antagonising sides (Cynthia and Brundige, 2014). Thus, their rights were forfeited in order to build and maintain peace among rivalry sides. It was until the times of enlightenment according to Chihambakwe and Chisaka (2016) when the rights of children were slowly advanced and recognised. It was during this era were some legal instruments were promulgated to protect and voice out on the rights of children. The promulgated legislative intended to hold accountable of any person violating the rights of children. Despite this remarkable development around realisation of the

rights of children, the incidences of CSA were recorded at an alarming pace. It is for this reason, Kenny and Wurtele (2012) noted of little attention being given to primary prevention measures (knowledge of warning signs) while the focus of many states were diverted to address the aftermath consequences of CSA (secondary and tertiary prevention). It was towards the end 20th century where new development were advanced in USA and the primary prevention measures of CSA was seen as the best option to end CSA (Dora, 1994). The focus of this work is therefore on the primary prevention measures which is informed by the knowledge of child sexual abuse warning signs. It is worth noting that CSA is global problem that effect all children regardless of the demographic factors and the level of development of their countries. CSA is commonly categories into either short or long term effects (Kenny and Wurtele 2012). The short term effects demonstrated through physiological symptoms, namely: genital breeding or swelling; failing to control urine or stool; difficulties in walking; contracting sexual transmitted infection; and pregnancies among older children (Kisanga et al., 2011).

Adding on, McCrann (2017) noted that the long term effect is normally visible using the psychological symptoms such as nightmare, failing to concentrate in class, learning abusing behaviour. The highlighted consequences of CSA does not end with children but also their families and countries. For instance, Mantula and Saloojee (2016) observed that the country has to provide the health and psychosocial support and care services to the abused child; has to pay for the expertise to deal with the mitigation services. Later on, the state has to meet the cost of investigation and collecting evidences that are required for court proceedings. It is from this argument, where it evidently shows that the benefit of imparting CSA warning signs outweigh the cost of dealing with the aftermath mitigation of the phenomena. Kenny and Wurtele (2012) noted that knowledge of CSA warning signs basically focuses on all measure taken before the incident of CSA happens to a child. It may involve all the practices that are done by perpetrator during recruitment process, which may include: attracting the child in his favour or control; and building trust with the child. The warning signs therefore intends to identify all the indicators that are observable and portrayed by most perpetrators especially in developed countries. Moreover, warning signs or indications of CSA before its occurrences can be observed using these features. For instance, Singh et al., (2018) noted of good, bad and confusing touching of child's genitals; in most cases when the child is recruited, normally the perpetrator introduces new words of genitals to the child. This is done basically to maintain the child's obedience towards carrying out the perpetrator's instructions.

Adding on, Mantula and Saloojee (2016) identified of the habit of delay to return home from school. Further, Knack et al., (2019) proposed of some children may decide to run away from home due to pressure from the perpetrator, while other may run away as they think no one may believe them when discloses it. Furthermore, Dora (1994) suggested that children exposed to warning signs, may avoid some places or people, this is to say, when the perpetrator is a family member, the child may try all the time to keep away from him or avoid places where there are indications of threats of CSA warning signs. The CSA warning signs were applicable and observable among children aged between 10 and 15 years old. With the knowledge of the identified CSA warning signs, the incidents of CSA can be reduced. Pointing on the limited knowledge of CSA warning signs among children in USA, Wurtele and Owens (1997) observed of children failing to identify of good, bad and confusing touching not only of their genitals but also of the body parts. Adding on (*ibid*) due to inadequate knowledge of CSA warning signs, other children indicated of the sexual touches as acceptable regardless of the outcome. It is due to limited knowledge of CSA warning signs where, Kenny and Wurtele (2010) noted of the increasing CSA incident despite numerous efforts in place to combat it.

Thus, in order to end the increasing cases of CSA, imparting knowledge of CSA warning signs is indisputable; it has to begin early especially with children at preschool moving towards other educational levels, such as elementary and secondary schools. Moreover, Wurtele and Kenny (2010) noted, despite the introduction and implementation of imparting knowledge of CSA warning signs program in preschools and elementary schools, without refreshers training among children after sometime, they tend to forget the covered content. It can be argue that imparting knowledge of CSA warning signs it is not done once, for its effectiveness, some refreshers training on the same have to be done often to carter for cognitive development among children. Taking into account of the magnitude of CSA incidents, the effort to impart knowledge of CSA warning signs cannot depend on a single platform, such as school environment. Wurtele and Kenny (2012) indicated that the effectiveness of television on reaching many people especially when the intended message has been designed taking into account of audience intended. Further, the selection of time to broadcast the intended content on CSA warning signs, has to pick the right time where the audience can watch it. They further pointed of films related to CSA warning signs, role plays or drama used into imparting knowledge of CSA among school going children. Despite the benefit associated with imparting knowledge of CSA warning signs among children in order

to combat CSA, Cirik et al (2019) while citing experience from Turkey, revealed that some family and community members still stand against these initiatives. Most of them, indicated that the program of imparting CSA warning signs, especially when mentioning names of genitals, it was perceived as irrelevant to children of the age below 10 years old. Adding on, others indicated that the program intended to teach children sexual related matters before their right time; hence violating the tradition and taboos of their community. Thus, in order to challenge the identified setback, the preparation of the content on CSA warning signs, has to observe the cultural diversity while involving parents and community members from initial stages. Moreover, Aksel et al (2018) noted, in the effort to imparting knowledge of CSA warning signs, the population approach of one size fits all have to be avoided. It is truly, the content is development for children, however with the same group, their level of cognitive development has to be considered. Children at preschool for instance, may not be exposed to the content as primary school pupils, which is expected to be the case for secondary school children (Cirik et al., 2019). This is due to the fact that the prepared content and the selection of words to use are very important factor to consider. When the prepared content has observed the age of children, it become easy to follow up for the effectiveness of the program.

Adding on, it was revealed that when these factors are considered, significant improvement was observed among all children. In a comparative study conducted in German on school based CSA warning signs program, the results indicated of remarkable development in terms of knowledge and skills gained among all children who participated in the study from schools which had implemented the program. However, the same study indicate poor knowledge of CSA warning signs among children in the school where the program was not implemented (Czerwinski et al., 2018). From these findings it can be argued that children from the schools where the program was not implemented, are exposed to CSA incidents. It can be said that in the context of developing countries, Tanzania in particular, there are many children in this categories (without knowledge of CSA warning signs), when necessary measures are not taken, are likely to fall into the hands of CSA perpetrator. Additionally, AlRammah et al (2019) revealed that imparting knowledge of CSA warning signs cannot be done by schools only without involving parents or care givers. In order to capacitate parents to be in a position of supporting children around CSA knowledge of warning signs, have to overcome the socio-cultural factors related to sexuality. Where in most cases, parents, cannot talk about sexual matters with their children. It was further revealed that due to socio-cultural factors, parents

would rather nick named the genitals. In this situation, where parents or care givers cannot talk to their children about genitals' name, the CSA perpetrators normally takes advantage of both children and parents limitation of knowledge and socio-cultural factors prohibiting them to talk. It is from this point of view, it can noted that parents or care giver have to improve on their communication with children so that can capitalise on the established trust to talk about all CSA warning signs. Drawing attention from Southern African, Zimbabwe in particular, Mantula and Saloojee (2016) opined that the imparting knowledge of CSA warning signs have to be inclusive by involving both children, parents and community members. By doing this, adds advantage to children, when challenged with any situation related to warning signs to get support from different people in the community and can find clarification of any misconception which otherwise the perpetrator of CSA would take advantage of. They further suggested that the increasing incident of CSA, cannot be dealt with few individuals, it demands all people.

It was further noted that government have to consider including the content of CSA warning signs into various curricula from preschool to secondary schools (*ibid*). It is the missing knowledge of CSA warning signs which continue to expose children to incidents of CSA. When children have the required knowledge, can avoid the traps used by the perpetrators, thus combating CSA. Revealing the reality of CSA incidents in Tanzania, Tanzania Police Force Annual Reports for 2019; 2018; 2017; 2016 revealed the following, in the year 2016, Ilala municipal reported 225 CSA incidents; Kinondoni 287 reported and Temeke had 426 cases of CSA. From the reported cases in 2016, Temeke municipal had more cases of CSA than other municipalities of Dar es Salaam. Adding on, in the year 2017, 225 cases were reported in Ilala; 270 cases were identified from Kinondoni and 432 cases of CSA were recorded from Temeke. Moreover, 133 cases were recorded in Ilala, 109 in Kinondoni and 195 from Temeke in the year 2018. Lastly, in the year 2019, there was an increase in all municipalities as compared to 2018, were 209 cases were recorded in Ilala, 217 from Kinondoni and 310 cases of CSA were recorded from Temeke. As the incidents of CSA have unfolded, the thread impose questions on the knowledge level of CSA warning signs among secondary school children. Adding on, this work look forwards to find out the common and least CSA warning signs among secondary school children.

Methodology

This study adopted quantitative research approaches; where Temeke Municipality was chosen as a case study, due to the fact that it had many cases related to child

sexual abuse as compared to other Municipalities in Dar es Salaam region and other regions of United Republic of Tanzania. In order to grasp the first hand information from research subjects, a descriptive design was employed. The information was therefore collected using self-administered questionnaire. The study purposeful selected five secondary schools in Temeke Municipal with higher prevalence of CSA incidents; such schools were; Mbagala, Kigungi, Mikwambe, Malele and Changanyikeni. The Police records of 2019 which shows 310 cases of CSA was used to inform the determinants of sample size. From the state population, the sample size formula by Cochran (1977) was employed as follows:

$$n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$$

Where; N = Population Size = 310
 n = Sample Size
 e = Error term = 5% (0.05)

From the formula, the sample size of 175 research subjects were obtained. Using simple randomly sampling, 35 children were selected from each school. The selected children where from form one to form three. However, the selection was primarily informed by the CSA incident reported at the police station. Collected data on the knowledge of CSA warning signs; the common and least known CSA warning signs was analysed using percent for each of the variable identified under warning signs.

Results

The first research question was based on the knowledge level of CSA warning signs among secondary school children. Where research subjects were exposed to five variables which represents knowledge of CSA warning signs. They were supposed to indicate the knowledge on each of them. The information were elicited from the research subjects as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Knowledge of Child Sexual Abuse Warning Signs

	Knowledge of CSA warning Signs	Good, bad & confusing touches (%)	Developing new words for genitals (%)	Developing lying habit (%)	Delaying to return home from school (%)	Fear of some people/ places (%)	Total (%)
Yes (%)	6.3	4.6	5.7	8	6.9	31.5	
No (%)	19.4	5.7	10.2	16.6	16.6	68.5	
Total (%)	25.7	10.3	15.9	24.6	23.5	100	

Table 1 shows that most of the research subjects (68.5%) had no knowledge of CSA warning signs; it was only 31.5% who indicated to have knowledge of CSA warning signs. On the other hand, respondents indicated to be conversant with delaying to return home from school with 8% and 6.9% for fear of some people or places. These variables were leading among respondents with score of CSA knowledge of warning signs. Adding on, 19.4% of respondents showed not to have knowledge of good, bad and confusing touching, while delaying to return home from school and fear of some people or place both scored 16.6% respectively as the second majority without knowledge of such specific variables. The second research question was based on the common and least known CSA warning sign among five secondary schools. Table 2 shows five variables of warning signs against names of secondary schools such as, Mbagala, Kingugi, Malele, Mikwambe and Changanyikeni.

Table 2: Identified Common and least Warning Signs against Secondary school

Table 2 shows that there were marginally differences of CSA knowledge of warning signs among secondary schools. The scores ranged between 17.2% for Mbagala which was the least to 22.1% for Changanyikeni, which was the highest. Moreover, the warning signs of good, bad and confusing touching (25.8%) and fear of some people or places (24.5%) were famous or popular among all secondary schools. On the other hand, developing new words for genitals (10.3%) and delaying to return home (15.5%) were the least known warning signs among secondary school children.

Further, knowledge of good, bad and confusing touches were treated as a single variable, it had a score of 6.3% of knowledge as observed from Malele, Mikwambe and Changanyikeni Secondary Schools; while developing lying habit scored 6.3% at Mikwambe Secondary school; 6.3% was observed with fear of some people and place at Kingugi Secondary school. Adding on, Changanyikeni secondary school showed of 6.7%, which was indicated on the variable of fear of some people and places. Further, the least knowledge was identified with developing new words for genitals, at Mbagala, Mikwambe and Changanyikeni secondary school respectively.

Secondary school Names	Good, bad & confusing touches (%)	Developing new words for genitals (%)	Developing lying habit (%)	Delaying to return home from school (%)	Fear of some people/ places (%)	Total (%)
Mbagala	4.6	1.7	4	2.9	4	17.2
Kingugi	2.3	2.3	4.6	3.4	6.3	18.9
Malele	6.3	2.9	5.6	2.3	2.9	20
Mikwambe	6.3	1.7	6.3	2.9	4.6	21.8
Changanyikeni	6.3	1.7	3.4	4	6.7	22.1
Total	25.8	10.3	23.9	15.5	24.5	100

Discussion of Results

The study examined knowledge level of CSA warning signs among secondary school children in Temeke Municipal. It also looked at the common and least known warning signs among secondary schools, hence the title of “Assessing knowledge of Warning signs among Secondary school”. The first research question has shown that despite various efforts of the government and other interested parts around child issues, there is still limited knowledge of warning signs among research subjects of this study. The findings further demonstrates the reason for the increasing of CSA incidents in the region. Knowledge of warning signs, when imparted correctly to children, it is expected to keep them safe and avoid various traps set before them.

However, without knowledge of warning signs, it is an obviously situation that the perpetrator can easy take advantage of the limited knowledge of CSA among children. On the other hand, the results portrays the focus of various intervention around the municipal. It seems that the available prevention measures are still focused on secondary prevention, where it deals with addressing the mitigation of the CSA consequences. Moreover, the selected respondents were the survivors of CSA; who were receiving services at different points. It was expected that their encounters would give them a better knowledge of warning signs. The findings of this study were supported by the work of Mantula and Saloojee (2016) who revealed that it is limited knowledge of warning signs that continue to expose children to CSA incidents. Further Kenny et al., (2012). suggested that, looking at the cost involved during mitigation of CSA, the states in sub Saharan region have to consider investing in imparting knowledge of CSA warning signs not only to children but also their parents and significant others. Adding on, the same position was held by Knack et al., (2019) who revealed that imparting knowledge of CSA warning signs have to be done to all children provided they can understand the imparted knowledge to them.

Generally, it can be argued that the available program on CSA prevention, have not focused on primary prevention of CSA, warning signs in particular. Thus, in order to combat CSA or reduce incidents of CSA, the knowledge of warning signs have to be imparted to children, who in turn are expected to share it at their families and communities. It is this intervention of imparting knowledge that could remove CSA incidents in Tanzania. The second research question presents the result on the popular and least warning signs among five secondary schools. It can be said that, fear of some people or places, developing lying habit and the knowledge of good, bad and confusing touching were identified by the research subjects as the common warning signs among children. Further, developing the new names of the genital was identified as the least known warning sign among others. The findings implies that, children in Temeke Municipal were conversant with fear of some people and places; this is to say, wherever parents sees the child keeping a distance with a visitor or any other person, should draw attention to such decision of the child. It is a common practice, at family level, when a child avoids a visitor who is a relative, parents normally force the child to remain closer to him or her. Further, the study identified, lying habit was another warning sign identified by the children, and this is to say a close follow up and motoring of the child changes in behaviour have to be done so that it is easy to establish the pattern of behavioural change to the child. In order to do effective, parents or other person who is closer to the child, have to be closely and

friendly person in order to observe such changes in behaviour of the child. Adding on, research subjects identified of the knowledge of good, bad and confusing touching to be among the popular warning signs. However, it is upon parents and interested parts to impart knowledge among children so that are in position to firmly different between the three touches. The findings of the study were mirrored with the work of Singh et al., (2018) who identified the same warning signs as useful and effective when intending to protecting children against the incidents of CSA. Adding on, Helmy et al., (2017) noted that since CSA is increasingly be committed by family members, relatives and visitors at family level, family members should not force their child to stay around the person is not comfortable with regardless of his relationship with the family. Generally, Kenny and Wurtele (2012) noted that there are no warning sign which does not lead to CSA incident, hence any think that is identified to lead to CSA incident, have to be treated with maximum attention so that children remain safe from any CSA encounter.

Conclusion

Tanzania just like other developing countries is experiencing an increasing incidents of CSA. This study has attached this trend with limited knowledge of CSA warning signs among children in secondary school. Since the finding have showed limited knowledge of CSA knowledge of warning signs among children, it is therefore expected that the government may initiate school based program in school so that children can have access to such knowledge. It is these program which are expected in turn to combat the incidents of CSA. Further, the data used for this study were collected from children were survivors of CSA, hence another study can be conducted on the counterpart children.

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