

Analysis of the Prevalence of Child Sexual Abuse by Geographical Area

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INTRODUCTION

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is a phenomenon that occurs worldwide and has significant negative consequences for those who experience it (Selengia et al., 2020). It implies experiences including contact and non contact abuses and is associated with profound physical and psychological health repercussions that impact children's developmental trajectories extending into their adult lives.

Various studies have observed that the prevalence of this phenomenon varies considerably depending on the geographical area in which the study was conducted and usually find differences between males and females victims. Contribute with deep and current analysis in this sense could provide information and impact in the preventive approach and strategies (Choudhry et al., 2018; Ji et al., 2013; Schönbucher et al., 2011; Selengia et al., 2020; Solehati et al., 2021).

OBJECTIVE

To analyse the mean prevalence for each geographical area and determine whether it affects the estimation of the mean prevalence of mixed CSA, differentiating between sexes.

METHOD

- The search for articles was carried out in the following databases: Web of Science, SCOPUS, ERIC Ebsco, PsycINFO, and Dialnet.
- Inclusion Criteria: included the words "Child Sexual Abuse" and "prevalence" in title or/and abstract; was published between January 2009 and December 2023; was an empirical study; the mean age of the sample was below 18 years old; reported a prevalence rate.
- The data were analysed separately according to the sex of the participants (both, female, and male). A meta-regression was performed to assess the impact of the geographical area variable on the estimation of the mean prevalence of mixed CSA, and a mean prevalence was estimated for each of the coded areas.

RESULTS

A total of 27 studies published between 2009 and 2023 were analysed (Figure 1). Not enough articles were found to analyse prevalence in Africa. The mean prevalence values are represented in Table 1. The prevalence of child sexual abuse by geographical area is represented in Figure 2.

Table 1. CSA Mean Prevalence

Area	Both Mixed CSA	Female Mixed CSA	Male Mixed CSA
North America	.11	.15	.11
South America	.15	.18	.15
Asia	.11	.09	.09
Europe	.06	.09	.08

Figure 1. Flowchart

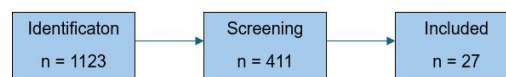
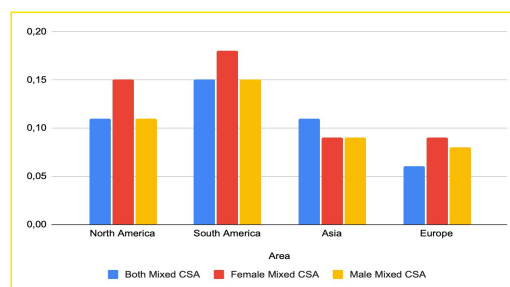


Figure 2. Prevalence of Child Sexual Abuse by geographical areas



CONCLUSIONS

In general, higher mean prevalence values for CSA were found in the American Continent, particularly in South American countries, whereas the lowest mean prevalence values for sexual abuse were found in Europe. Additionally, in all geographical areas, the mean prevalence of CSA in the female sample was higher than in the mixed and male samples.

According to these data, girls in South America exhibit the highest risk of experiencing CSA, highlighting the imperative to allocate greater attention and resources toward the prevention of CSA within this region and population.

Due to the lack of data, it has not been possible to calculate an average prevalence of child sexual abuse in the African continent, and therefore it cannot be confirmed whether this continent has the highest rates of CSA.

REFERENCES

