

Child Sexual Abuse and Media Reporting: Perception of Workers of Non-Governmental Organizations in Lagos State, Nigeria*

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Abstract

Background: Child sexual abuse (CSA) refers to the sexual abuse of children which is a prevalent problem in the world with serious consequences for CSA victims. The workers of non-governmental organizations and the social workers have the major roles of handling cases of child sexual abuse.

Methods: The study employed qualitative method. Multistage and purposive sampling was used to select respondents and five in-depth interviews were conducted with workers of non-governmental organizations, and social workers with three or more years of practice to elicit information from respondents. The data collected during the in-depth interview sessions were transcribed and analysed.

Results: The study shows that child sexual abuse is prevalent in Lagos State. Findings showed that most respondents get their information from media. However, all respondents agree that there is minimal information on child sexual abuse by the media. The findings from this study also showed that shame, stigmatization, and fear is the reason for non-disclosure of the act. Findings showed that all respondent gets their information from print and electronic media.

Conclusion: Therefore, this study concludes that there is a need for good reportage and follow up on cases of child sexual abuse. This would create awareness and encourage parents and victims to speak up about the act.

Recommendation: In accordance with the findings of this study, the following recommendations were suggested: The media should extensively give more information and education on the issue of child sexual abuse by having a designated to educate parents and children on child sexual abuse and ways to avoid being a victim. There should be an active communication between a mother and her child. The child should be taught how to know when he/she is in vulnerable situation. The judiciary should play their role in the process of prosecution of the abuser. Necessary punishment should be given to any offender caught, and the offense should be properly reported by the media to the populace. This would help create fear in the mind of potential offenders and also encourage victims to report the act. Courses on gender-based violence and child sexual abuse should be included in the school curriculum.

Keywords: Non-governmental organization, Perception, Media reporting, Child Sexual abuse