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Module: Introduction to Research (BMHP5005)

Assessment 2: Viva Voce

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Systematic literature review topic:

Consequences of childhood abuse on adolescent and adult mental health in the United Kingdom.

Aims of the study:

- To find out if adults who experienced abuse during childhood are at a higher risk of adversity with impact on their mental health.
- To determine whether childhood abuse is a public health issue and cause of health inequality

Objectives:

- Looking at consequences of childhood maltreatment and its impact on the future mental health of individuals based on primary research studies carried out in the UK.

Methodology:

Research methods: Systematic literature review

Keywords: Child abuse, childhood abuse, child maltreatment, child neglect, mental health, adult mental health, young adults, adults, UK, United Kingdom, England

Online database used: PubMed, UWTSD library, UCL library, Scopus, Google scholar

Inclusion criteria:

- Date of publication: 2012-2022
- Language: English
- Type of source: Academic journal articles, based on primary research
- Location: United Kingdom
- Study related to young children, young adults and adults

Exclusions Criteria:

- Research conducted outside the UK
- Language of publication
- Older articles
- Research based on infants, or elderly.

Literature review

Author(s), title, and year of publication	Aim of study	Methods and Sample size and characteristics	Summary of main findings
Suzet Tanya Lereya et al. “Adult mental health consequences of peer bullying and maltreatment in childhood: two cohorts in two countries” 2015	To find out about the effects of childhood maltreatment and bullying on the future mental health of the victim	Avon Longitudinal Study of UK parents and children and data from the US. 4026 children from the UK with a history of abuse and bullying.	Child abuse history victims were at an increased risk of depression in young adulthood. Abused children were not at a high risk of mental health problems compared to children without such a history. However, those who were abused and bullied together were at risk of more mental health problems.
Lucy Bowes et al. “Peer victimisation during adolescence and its impact on depression on early adulthood: prospective cohort study in the United Kingdom” 2015	To find out if children victimisation leads to adult depression.	6719 participants with history of peer abuse at the young age below 13 years old. Observational study.	This primary research shows that victimisation in childhood is associated with an increase in risk of developing depression as an adult.
Charlotte A.M. Cecil et al. “Disentangling the mental health impact of childhood abuse and neglect”. 2017	To find the connection between mental health problems in early adulthood and being a victim of child abuse in the past.	204 participants aged 16-24 years, from a mental health charity, London secondary schools and online services. Questionnaire booklet. Quantitative data.	Association between different types of abuse and mental health outcomes shows that exposure to multiple types of abuse leads to more serious mental health symptoms.

Results

- Childhood abuse has an impact on adolescent and adult mental health.
- The type of abuse leads to different outcome of adult mental health issues.
- Psychological and emotional abuse has got the strongest influence on adolescence and future wellbeing of the victims.

Key findings: importance for Health and Social Care, based on chosen articles

Public health concern

- Long term mental and physical consequences.
- Need for identifying the victims as early as possible (Buckingham and Daniolos, 2013)
- Role of the school and health professionals to recognize and screen for child abuse victims (WebMD, n.d.)
- Involvement of mental health services

Abnormalities in adult behavior leading to health and social care professional intervention

- Noticeable impact on future interpersonal relations (Khiron Clinics, 2020)
- Low self esteem, anxiety, depression (Bowes et al., 2015)
- Difficulty in parenting (Health Essentials from Cleveland Clinic, 2020)
- More likely to develop mental health condition (University of Birmingham, n.d.)

Discussion

- Quantitative data was analyzed on a wide range of participants with different types of childhood maltreatment.
- It allows to compare childhood abuse with other forms of victimization leading to mental health issues in adolescence and adulthood.
- Comparison of studies carried out in the UK and USA allows to research different social setting to find similarity in findings.
- Large sample sizes brought variety of findings.

Limitation:

- Stigma of childhood abuse, fear of criminal investigation made the research difficult or not fully reliable.
- Specific groups from certain environments contributing in the primary research could misrepresent the population.

Conclusion

Prevention of children maltreatment should be the best intervention.

In many aspects, child abuse is related to the socio-economic development and depends on many aspects like income, parental substance misuse or cultural views.

Children experiencing different kinds of abuse are often exposed to many factors in their future life. One of them is mental health difficulties. It also creates the circle of abuse where victims becoming abusers.

Intensive and advanced research is needed to prevent this risk of child abuse and its future outcome.

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