

Effect of Neglect and Abuse on Psychopathology

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ABSTRACT

Drawing heavily from the body of existing academic literature, this scholarly exposition carefully examines the profound effects of childhood abuse and neglect on the ontogenesis of psychopathology. Early negative experiences, including as physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, as well as other forms of neglect, interfere with normal developing paths. Research continually shows that these traumatic experiences lead to substantial changes in brain activity, which in turn affects the effectiveness of emotional control and stress response systems, resulting in the development of maladaptive coping strategies and insecure attachment schemas. Studies by Sperry et al. (2013) have confirmed the mediating role of social support in reducing long-term effects; similarly, studies by Young and Widom (2014) have demonstrated observable emotional processing deficiencies in victims of abuse. Additionally, within communities of maltreated children, Cicchetti and Rogosch (2001) have discovered unique patterns of neuroendocrine dysregulation. Later research by Charak and Koot (2015) found a correlation between the degree of maltreatment and personality pathology, and Jose and Cherayi (2022) proposed a relationship between behavioral disorders, child maltreatment, and paternal alcohol abuse. In conclusion, Jangam et al. (2022) have shown that women with psychiatric disorders are more likely to experience emotional abuse. When taken as a whole, these empirical results highlight how urgent it is to identify and execute precisely tailored therapies that address the complex and severe long-term impacts of childhood abuse on mental health outcomes.

Keywords: *Trauma, Neglect, Psychopathology, Abuse*

Societal and cultural influences have always had an eminent impact on psychopathology on four distinct but related aspects – diagnosis, occurrence and distribution, public attitudes, and treatment. (Dohrenwend, B. P., & Dohrenwend, B. S. (1974). The understanding that behavior does not occur in a vacuum has revolutionized the research into the causative factors of maladaptive behaviors and psychopathology. While support from others has been proven to improve one's ability to cope with life stresses, loss of social support has also been linked to the perceived impact of life stresses. (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Cohen, Gottlieb, & Underwood, 2000; Kaniasty & Norris, 1993; Vaux, 1988). Various scholars have worked on the effect of child abuse and neglect on development of children. Child abuse and neglect that are often private, ambiguous, and socially stigmatizing are particularly likely to exhaust social support because they elicit confusion, helplessness, and aversion in others [what has been called the “deterioration model” of

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Effect of Neglect and Abuse on Psychopathology

social support (Barrera, 1986; Eckenrode & Wethington, 1990; Kaniasty & Norris, 1993; Wheaton, 1985)

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sperry et al. conducted research titled “Child abuse and neglect, social support, and psychopathology in adulthood: A prospective investigation” on children with documented histories of physical and sexual abuse and neglect and reported that social support plays a significant role in mediating and moderating some long-term consequences of childhood maltreatment.

Young J. C. et al published a study titled “Long-term effects of child abuse and neglect on emotion processing in adulthood” which examined the long-term effects of childhood maltreatment on emotion processing in adulthood, finding that maltreated individuals show deficits in recognizing emotions, with IQ mediating this relationship, while factors like depression and anxiety also influence overall accuracy.

Cicchetti D., and Rogosch F. A. conducted a study titled “The impact of child maltreatment and psychopathology on neuroendocrine functioning” which found that maltreated children, particularly those with clinical-level internalizing or comorbid internalizing and externalizing problems, showed distinct cortisol regulation patterns, highlighting the combined impact of maltreatment and psychopathology on neuroendocrine functioning.

Charak R., Koot H. M. conducted a study titled “Severity of maltreatment and personality pathology in adolescents of Jammu, India: A latent class approach” and concluded that four distinct classes adolescents based on severity and types of maltreatment can be identified, finding that higher severity and exposure to multiple maltreatment types were associated with greater personality pathology, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions.

Jose J. P. and Cherayi S. J researched “the effect of parental alcohol abuse severity and child abuse and neglect on child behavioural disorders in Kerala” through a cross sectional community based survey conducted on randomly selected 4133 alcoholic parents with children aged 6 – 16 years from seven districts of Kerala, India and concluded that hazardous and harmful alcohol use, along with various forms of neglect and abuse, significantly exacerbate children's internalizing, externalizing, behavioral disorders, and ADHD, with living standards further impacting externalizing disorders and ADHD.

Jangam K. et al conducted a study on “Incidence of childhood abuse among women with psychiatric disorders compared with healthy women: Data from a tertiary care centre in India” and found that women with psychiatric disorders reported significantly higher levels of emotional and overall abuse in childhood compared to healthy women, suggesting that emotional abuse may predispose individuals to psychiatric conditions, while physical and sexual abuse rates were similar between the groups.

CONCLUSION

Together, the reviewed research highlights the severe and complex effects of childhood abuse on long-term emotional, psychological, and physical consequences. Increased risks of psychopathology, emotional processing deficiencies, neuroendocrine dysregulation, personality pathology, and behavioural problems are frequently associated with childhood abuse and neglect. Social support, parental alcohol consumption, and emotional maltreatment are all important factors that can either exacerbate or lessen these impacts. To

Effect of Neglect and Abuse on Psychopathology

address the long-term effects of childhood maltreatment and lessen its influence on mental health and adult functioning, these findings emphasize the significance of early detection, focused treatments, and supportive surroundings.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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