

A CRITICAL REVIEW OF CHILD MALTREATMENT INDICES: THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS, PSYCHOMETRIC PROPERTIES AND CROSS-CULTURAL APPLICATION

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INTRODUCTION


- Studies have been dominated by epidemiological investigations conducted in collaboration with Child Protection Services
- Focus on confirmed or substantiated cases
- “Only scratch the surface of the cases out there”
- WHO has called for:
 - Greater availability of child maltreatment indices
 - More thorough evaluation of existing indices as well as of new indices





CHILD MALTREATMENT STATISTICS

- Different definitions and indices
- Statistics are often fragmented
- Not comparable across countries or groups of a population

 **America** ranked one of the highest in terms of child deaths due to maltreatment, **2.2 per 100 000** (NationMaster, 2010)

 In 2007, **753 351** cases of neglect, **530 700** of physical abuse, **122 019** of sexual abuse, **70 793** of emotional maltreatment, and **52 712** of medical neglect were investigated

 **Canada** was classified as 'middle', **0.7 deaths per 100 000**, with **883 victims per 100 000** for physical and sexual assault

 In 2007/8, Childline reported **1048** calls related to sexual abuse, **2535** for physical abuse, **2914** for emotional abuse, and **3356** for neglect

 **48 732 crimes against children** were committed for 2008/9 (SAPS, 2009)

RATIONALE AND AIMS

- Child maltreatment is a global issue
- This paper set out the following aims:
 - 1. To evaluate the theoretical frameworks underpinning child maltreatment indices**
 - 2. To critically evaluate the psychometric properties of a group of indices designed to assess child maltreatment**
 - 3. To critically evaluate the cross cultural application of these tools, evaluating the possibility of using them within the South African context**

METHODOLOGY

- Search engines consulted included:
 - EBSCO HOST, Science Direct, Jstor, Pubmed, Springer link and Google Scholar
- Key words used included:
 - Child maltreatment, child abuse, child neglect, index/indices, specific indices and acronyms i.e. Child Trauma Questionnaire, CTQ
- Focused on scales identified by WHO (2006) as well as those most used and cited
- Selected only the studies using the full assessment tool
- Only English articles were selected

SCALE	ABOUT THE SCALE
Parent-Child Conflict Tactics Scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Versions: Child version (ages 10 – 18), parent version (children under 10 years) • Measures: Constructs aggression and violence • Four subscales: Non-violent discipline, Psychological Aggression, Physical Assault and Neglect
Adverse Childhood Experiences Scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asks about adverse experience in first 18 years of life • Measures: Physical, verbal and sexual abuse, having a battered mother, parental separation or divorce and four types of household dysfunction: drug abuse, mental illness, suicide or criminal behaviour
Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measures: Conventional crime, child maltreatment, peer and sibling victimization, sexual victimization and witnessing direct or indirect victimization. • Contains follow-up questions including the number of times a child has been victimized, injuries sustained and about the perpetrator
IPSCAN Child Abuse Screening Tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both parent and child version as well as retrospective and peer version • Measures: Physical , psychological and sexual abuse, physical punishment and neglect • Subscales: Home (38 items) and institutional sections (44 items)
Adult Adolescent Parenting Inventory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measures: Parenting and child rearing • Subscales: Role reversal, empathy, developmental expectations and corporal punishment
Child Trauma Questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measures: Emotional, physical and sexual abuse, emotional and physical neglect • Validation scales: Minimization/denial scale
Child Abuse Potential Inventory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designed for adults at risk for perpetrating physical child abuse • Measures: Distress, rigidity, unhappiness, problems with child and self, problems with family and problems with others • Contains three validity scales

Review Findings

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graph TD; A[Review Findings] --> B[Theoretical Underpinnings]; A --> C[Psychometric Evaluation]; A --> D[Cross Cultural Application]; B --> E[Definitions]; B --> F[Theoretical Frameworks];
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Theoretical Underpinnings

Psychometric Evaluation

Cross Cultural Application

Definitions

Theoretical Frameworks

DEFINITIONS

- Inclusiveness
- Core elements: physical, sexual and emotional abuse as well as neglect
- Neglect: physical (medical neglect, nutritional neglect) and emotional neglect
- Other definitions include commercial and other exploitation
- Problems encountered by scholars with regards to definitions include:
 - Definitions reflect specific cultural beliefs
 - The meaning behind certain behaviours serves to pathologise a culture when a definition is applied inappropriately
 - Contextualisation and re-operationalisation

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

- Lack of specific theoretical formulations
- Reliance on empirical findings from previous research
- Use of amalgamations of theoretical ideas
- Competition between theories for exclusive representation
- Championing of particular constructions of the problem for invested interest of some
- Constructions have implications for responses to problems

PSYCHOMETRIC EVALUATION

PSYCHOMETRIC PROPERTIES	CTS	ACE	JVQ	ICAST	AAPI	CTQ	CAPI
Internal Consistency Reliability							
Test-Retest Reliability							
Convergent Validity							
Construct Validity							
Discriminant Validity							
Factor Structure: Principal Components Analysis							
Factor Structure: Confirmatory/ Exploratory Factor Analysis							
Cross Cultural Application							

CROSS-CULTURAL APPLICATION

- Social and cultural factors ignored
- Evidence for differences in conceptual interpretations
- Translation and equivalence issues
- Need for supplemented assessments
- Holistic and ecological approach needed
- Evidence-based approach
- Culturally sensitive approach

DISCUSSION

Technical issues:

- Lack of systematic empirical evidence
- Subject area lacks cohesive framework of investigation
 - E.g. Sampling, sample sizes, matched samples
- Integration and assessment of evidence is difficult

Psychometric Evaluation Issues:

- Validation studies scarce
- Over reliance on exploratory factor analysis
- Reliability

CONCLUSION

Review Limitations

- Review is limited by the number of scales reviewed
- Lack of studies focusing on psychometric evaluations

In Sum

- Review findings show promising results
- Cross-cultural issues need careful attention
- Technical issues need to be addressed
- A great need for an integrated *theory-* and *evidence-based* orientation

If we are to teach real peace in this world, and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with the children.

Mohandas Gandhi