

Healthcare professionals' consideration of childhood maltreatment on pediatric pain management

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Background

- Pediatric pain is undermanaged across healthcare systems¹¹.
- Children with a history of maltreatment are at an increased risk of experiencing pain; however, they are more likely to have their pain unrecognized by healthcare professionals⁴.
- The alarming rates of under-assessed pain are of greater concern for maltreated populations who are already at an increased risk of experiencing numerous adverse life effects.
- Proper pain assessment is important because undermanaged pediatric pain is also associated with numerous adverse effects in addition to the distress it causes the patient.
- When assessing an individual's pain, observers are influenced by a multitude of top-down and bottom-up processes⁵. This raises concern for children who have been maltreated as both top-down and bottom-up influences appear to be compromised.

Pain Assessment Influences:



Aims and Hypothesis

The current study aims to address this gap in the literature by examining if pain knowledge predicts whether healthcare professionals pain assessment methods are tailored for children with a history of maltreatment.

Hypothesis:

- Healthcare professionals with higher levels of knowledge regarding the impact of childhood maltreatment on pain will be more likely to report they consider a history of child maltreatment when determining a pain management strategy for pediatric populations.

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Relevance

Maltreatment

32%

of adults are estimated to have experienced abuse as a child²

Associations to Maltreatment:

1. Comorbid diagnoses¹²
2. Depression⁷
3. Substance use disorder¹
4. Decreased emotion regulation⁶
5. Increased experience of pain⁸

Proper pain assessment for children with a history of maltreatment is crucial to prevent the comorbid impact of unmanaged pain and maltreatment.

Pediatric Pain

60.5%

of children have their pain assessed with a single-non validated measure¹¹

Untreated pain:

1. Negatively impacts the daily functioning of children and their families¹⁰
 2. Is associated with lower quality of life⁹
- Proper pain management has increasingly been advocated as a fundamental human right³.

Methods

Questionnaire:

1. **Section 1:** Close ended, **self-report questions** about pain assessment and management.
2. **Section 2:** **Application-based questions.** Fictitious scenario describing a child with a history of maltreatment. Close and open-ended questions regarding how they would assess the child's pain.
3. **Section 3:** Adapted version of the validated, **"Knowledge and Attitudes Survey"**. Original survey was shortened and questions assessing HCP knowledge of the impact of maltreatment on pain were added.

Participant Recruitment:

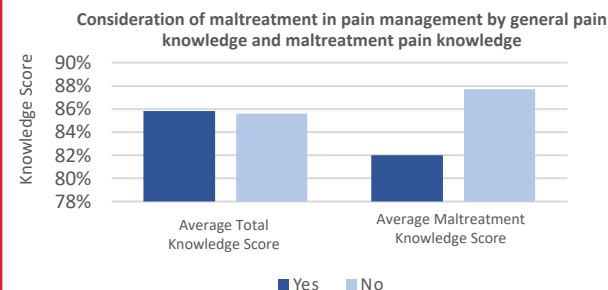
This study was conducted online through the survey platform, Qualtrics. Professional associations were contacted to disseminate the questionnaire to healthcare professionals through their listservs and newsletters. Participants were also collected through snowball sampling.

Sample Demographics

- Participants ($n = 19$) were predominantly female (18).
- Ages ranged from 20 – 84
- Participants consisted of medical doctors (9), Registered nurses (4) and other professions including pediatric nurse practitioners (2).

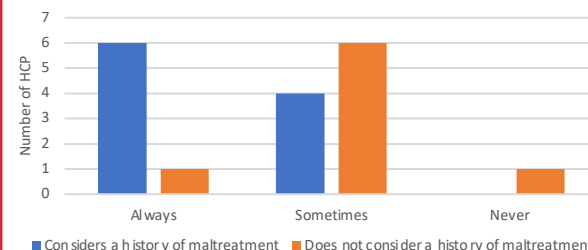
Results

Hypothesis: HCP maltreatment-specific pain knowledge will predict whether they consider a history of maltreatment when determining a pain management strategy for pediatric patients.



Significant result:

Frequency of using supportive, non-suggestive statements and maltreatment consideration when deciding on a management strategy for a child's pain



Discussion

Results for the study's hypothesis were insignificant. This is largely thought to be due to the study's small sample size (15).

Study Limitations:

- Predominantly female sample that was self-selected
- Sample size was small

Future Research:

- Apply this research to medical settings (e.g., what tailored management strategies are most effective for children with a history of maltreatment?)
- Investigate why increased frequency of using supportive, non-suggestive statements was predictive of maltreatment consideration for pain management