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Introduction

The UK has one of the highest child poverty rates in the industrialised world: 15.4 per cent of the child population (UNICEF 2005), or an estimated 3.8 million children (New Policy Institute 2004) live in relative poverty. Campaigning for a reduction in child poverty is high on the agenda of many children's charities and organisations, as the 'Make poverty history' campaign earlier this year demonstrated (Wulczyn, 2010). The UK government has made reducing child poverty a priority, pledging to halve these numbers by 2010 and eradicate child poverty by 2020. Child poverty should be of concern to everyone and is of particular importance for healthcare professionals as the impact on children's health of living in poverty can be significant. Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 states that we all have a duty to safeguard children and protect them from harm. Can child poverty be a cause of harm and therefore should it be classed as a form of abuse? If this is the case then it would be a duty of nurses and other healthcare professionals to recognise the impact that poverty has on a child and his or her family and act accordingly.

Discussion

Child Poverty

In different parts of the world, poverty is childish face. Children and adolescents have alarming rates of poverty, well above those with other age groups. This poverty condemns his reproduction between generations and dramatically restricts opportunities to develop skills and opportunities to translate throughout life. In order to relate the poverty estimates to the structure

distributive society has turned to another way of looking at Child poverty in the region. If absolute poverty measures people talk about the percentage of children who are below the "level minimum income "to enable them to meet their basic needs, the central question behind this new estimate of poverty is the : what percentage of children are well below the "average income" of society and, as a consequence, are prevented from enjoying welfare who should have access according to average productivity of the society they live in? More than in the consumption level necessary to meet the basic needs, this question highlights the average consumption pattern prevailing in society and considered poor who cannot access. This way of analyzing poverty in childhood is of particular relevance in Europe, which is the region with greater inequity in the world (Hudson, 1999).

Child poverty increases in volume and urgency in European countries, the vast majority of children in relative poverty face also grades very extremes of absolute deprivation, which emphasizes the urgency of the challenge posed by child poverty (Collings, 2008). The poor children of the region, besides being unable to access the general standards of being established in their societies, are largely prevented from meeting their basic needs, which destroys their present capabilities to exploit future opportunities because, for example, malnutrition and mortality. Inequality characteristic of country not only affects them today, but they mortgage life. Moreover, since the early nineties to beginning of this decade, there was an increase in child poverty in European countries analyzed (Wulczyn, 2010).

Child Abuse

Child abuse is defined as abuse and neglect that are under the age 18, and includes all types of physical or psychological abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, negligence and commercial or otherwise causing or likely to cause damage to health, development or dignity of the child, or endanger their survival, in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power. Exposure to partner violence also sometimes included among the forms of child abuse (NSPCC, 2010).

Child abuse is a global problem with serious consequences that can last a lifetime. There are no reliable estimates of the global prevalence of child abuse, as there is no data on the situation in many countries, especially those of low and middle income. Child abuse is complex and difficult to study (NSPCC, 2010). Current estimates vary widely, depending on the country and the research method used. These estimates depend on:

Child abuse definitions used;

Maltreatment type studied;

Coverage and quality of official statistics;

Coverage and quality of surveys based on the reports of the victims, parents or caregivers.

However, international studies show that approximately 20% of women and 5 to 10% of men report having been sexually abused in childhood, while 25 to 50% of children of both sexes relate physical abuse. In addition, many children are subjected to psychological abuse (also called emotional abuse) and neglect victims (Cloke, 2007).

It is estimated that each year 31,000 die from homicide under 15. This understates the true extent of the problem, as a large proportion of deaths due to child abuse are wrongly attributed to falls, burns, drowning and other causes. In situations of armed conflict and to refugees, girls are

particularly vulnerable to violence, sexual exploitation and abuse by soldiers, security forces, members of their community, humanitarian workers and others.

Consequences of Child Abuse

Child abuse is a cause of suffering for children and families, and can have long-term consequences. Maltreatment causes stress and is associated with early brain development disorders. Extreme cases of stress can alter the development of the nervous and immune systems. Consequently, adults who have been abused in childhood are at increased risk of behavioural problems, physical and mental, such as:

Violence (as victims or perpetrators);

Depression;

Consumption of snuff;

Obesity;

High-risk sexual behaviours;

Unwanted pregnancies;

Abuse of alcohol and drugs

Beyond its health and social consequences, child abuse has an economic impact that covers the costs of hospitalization, treatments for reasons of mental health, social services for children and the long-term health costs.

According to UNICEF, child protection may be defined as steps taken to prevent and respond to violence against children, or any form of abuse and exploitation. These include child trafficking, sexual abuse, and child labour. In some countries, the traditional and cultural practices also come in the ambit of child abuse. For instance, the mutilation of female genital and early marriages categorize as serious forms of child abuse. UNICEF has designed several programs to protect children and ensure their safety. These programs include not only the normal children but also children who are in the midst of some conflicting situation such as during war, orphans and others (Cloke, 2007).

Child survival and development is at stake in matters of child abuse. Child abuse, unfortunately, is common in both the developing and the developed countries. Children who have gone through any form of child abuse are vulnerable, and some even have distorted personalities. These children have a higher risk of mortality, physical and mental challenges, chronic ailments such as HIV/AIDS infection, homelessness, abandonment from the parents and the society, vagrancy and personally poor skills of parenting in their future lives.

Forms of Child Abuse and their Recognition

There are four types of child abuse and neglect. These are physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional maltreatment and neglect.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse means harming the child physically or injuring the child. This harm can be deliberate and even unintentional (UNICEF, 2006). For instance, a parent or guardian may unintentionally hit a child real bad to discipline him. The use of the belt will leave faint scars on the child's fragile body. This also includes any physical punishment awarded to the child that is a clear misfit with the child's age and physical strength. There is a clear demarcation between punishment aimed for disciplining the child and child physical abuse. Though, a majority of physical abusers of child use discipline as an excuse (Lalayants, 2010).

Physical abuse can be recognized if the child bears unexplained bruises and scars, black eyes and fractured bones. Moreover, if the child does not want to go home or is too submissive towards his parents it is a sign of physical abuse. A child who is unable to enjoy others' approach may be going through physical abuse.

Emotional Abuse

This involves deliberate or unintentional ways to belittle the child, calling him or her names and making faulty comparison with other children on a continual basis. Often inappropriate use of adjectives for the child can also have serious, lifelong psychological implication for the child. For instance, telling the child that he is worthless and a mistake can make the child believe that he truly is good for nothing and will destroy all his capabilities and talents? This also involves exposing the child to any form of abuse, whether with the child himself or abuse to someone else. Silent treatment is another form of emotional abuse whereby the child gets abandoned (UNICEF, 2006).

Emotional maltreatment with the child may be recognized if the child is extreme in his behaviour. This can involve either or both the extremes. For instance, extreme docility and compliance and extreme aggression may both be taken as signs of emotional abuse against the child (McKeel, 1978).

Child Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse against children involves pressurizing the child to engage in physical, sexual activity, exposing them to inappropriate explicit or pornographic content, or using them to produce pornographic content. Sexual abuse leads to severe psychological trauma for the child and his parents or their loved ones (UNICEF, 2006).

Sexual abuse may be recognized if the child has visible, physical problems such as difficulty in walking and sitting. The child may experience nightmares and wet his bed. He may become anhedonic, or there may be a sudden change in the child's appetite. Moreover, if the parent of the child is overly protective or isolated and secretive about the child, this may be taken as a sign of sexual abuse against the child.

Prevention Policies

Preventing child abuse that is linked to poverty passes first through the establishment of an appropriate framework, which takes into account the specific social group, such as the social level and the surrounding environment, in order to design an appropriate strategy for prevention.

Some preventive policies would arise for example, the following:

1. Policies designed to assemble and joint community network, involving the various actors in the creation and establishment of a plan based on the identification of problems.

2. Policies related to production, such as the implementation of the programs Pro-Huerta, cooperative production of chicken, pickles, etc., involving low cost of funding and potential market entry, barter clubs, ranging from the food to school supplies (books) (UNICEF, 2006).

3. Policies directly related to child nutrition, as are the number of soup kitchens that have proliferated lately in this country

4. Policies directly related to the care of children, such as community nurseries where mothers who work or plan to access a heads / as, to fulfil their task, leaving their children in the care of other mothers in the same community.

5. Policies related to the underpinnings of the schooling of children, an example can be found in previous issues of "Aim High".

6. Policies related to prevention and health care, such as the establishment of campaigns in which information is provided for the prevention and control of any epidemic outbreak of infectious diseases, immunizations, etc (Lister, 2006).

Child Protection Policy

Many public and private sector organizations in the UK are working on child protection in the UK. The worldwide organization in this regard is UNICEF that has laid down the child protection policy. UNICEF has been working closely with country level and regional parliamentarians to design this policy. It has also published handbooks on child trafficking (2005) and child protection (2004). The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) protects the children's rights and exploitation. This includes protection from all forms of sexual abuse that is physical, emotional, and sexual and neglect. Furthermore, there are Optional Protocols to this publication on child prostitution and pornography, child trafficking, and usage of children in conflicting situations such as war. The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), is primarily responsible for child protection in England Wales. It provides both statutory and non-statutory guidance for the local authorities working on child protection. The major agencies working in the UK on child protection are Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCBs), Area Child Protection Committees (ACPCs), and Child Protection Committees (CPCs) operating at the local level. The Children Act 1989 governs the child protection system in the UK. The act amended through the legislation. Lord Laming's inquiry into the death of 8-year-old Victoria Climbié in 2000 led to the government publishing Every Child Matters (2003), and subsequently the Children Act 2004 provided the legal framework for the program (Stevens, 2007).

Every Child Matters (ECM)

In the year 2003, the UK government launched Every Child Matters for the child protection. The policy initiative covers children and young adults up to 19 years old. However, the policy includes children with a disability till the age of 24 years (Lister, 2006). The policy covers

themes like children's economic wellbeing, health, safety, achievement and enjoyment, and positive contribution. ECM ensures accountability and legislation at the national, regional and local levels (Stevens, 2007).

UK still is one of the countries where life changes are unequal. This has repercussions for the society as well as the underprivileged children. Child abuse means that the child will not be able to fulfil his potential. The government in the UK has taken several measures to ensure child protection. These include the establishment of Sure Start Children's Centres to provide basic health, education, family support and employment in the underprivileged neighbourhoods in the country. The government has also established the Young People's Fund and child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) to focus on children out of school. The implications of changes in the family patterns in the UK in terms of increase in the annual divorce rate increase in the number of lone parents and the need for women to participate in the economic cycle on changes in the child protection related issues (Lister, 2006).

Role of Multi-Professional teams in Safeguarding Children

A multi-professional approach to safeguarding children means professionals from different agencies such as professional groups, organizations and services who provide services to children and their families working together towards a common goal of child protection. Multi-professional approach facilitates information sharing, effective decision making based on a good assessment of all relevant information, and inter agency cooperation. Child protection is a shared responsibility and requires that different professionals who have the expertise and role relevant to this field may work in cooperation with each other (UNICEF, 2006). For instance, the private

sector organizations that are working on child protection may cooperate with the psychologists and run awareness campaigns on child abuse and the need for child protection. Anyone who wants to play some role in this regard may cooperate with the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Other promising preventive programs are:

Those designed to prevent head injuries from abuse, generally these hospital programs through which informs new parents about the dangers of shaking young children and how to address the problem of children with inconsolable crying (Lister, 2006). Those designed to prevent sexual abuse in childhood. Usually held in schools and teach children:

Ownership of her body;

The differences between normal and touching contacts impudent;

How to recognize abusive situations;

How to say "no";

How to reveal the abuse to an adult that they trust

These programs are effective in strengthening protective factors against childhood sexual abuse (eg, knowledge of sexual abuse and protective behaviours), but no evidence that they reduce other types of abuse (Stevens, 2007). The sooner these interventions occur in the child's life the greater the benefits it can bring to it (eg, cognitive, behavioural and social skills, educational attainment) and society (eg crime reduction). In addition, early recognition of cases and continued assistance to victims and their families can help reduce the recurrence of abuse and to mitigate its consequences.

Conclusion

Using the perspective of relative poverty and establishing a glance compared to the European countries, the present analysis was shown that it is not necessary that the countries of the region reach relatively high levels of income to reduce poverty child. Consequently, it would be reasonable to focus strategically basic and effective investments, among which include measures as the provision of essential micronutrients, adequate coverage immunization, access to clean water and sanitation, and as early childhood development services, among others. Child protection is one of the most important needs of all countries facing child abuse problems. The implications of child abuse on the child, and the family are not only detrimental to the well being of that family but also to the well being of society. The children subjected to any form of abuse face many physical and psychological issues and grow up to be a burden on the nation. The UK government has taken several initiatives to address the issue. Every Child Matters (ECM) is just one of them. Child protection needs a multi-professional, multi-agency approach only then the country will be able to provide a safe and healthy environment for all its children. This responsibility for providing a safe heaven on earth for children rests on the shoulders of each and every individual, whether people are someone who is involved in a related profession or not. The fruit of their efforts today will be reaped by their children tomorrow.

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