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Brief Communication

Risk factors and child sexual abuse among secondary school students in the Northern Province (South Africa)

S.N Madu ^a ... K Peltzer ^a

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Abstract

Objective: This is an investigation into the risk factors that could discriminate childhood sexual abuse (CSA) from non-abuse in the Northern Province (South Africa).

Method: 414 students in standard 9 and 10 in three secondary schools in the province filled-in a retrospective self-rating questionnaire in a classroom setting. Questionnaires included modified and adapted questions from the [Finkelhor's \(1979\) Risk Factor Checklist](#), and asked for physical contact forms of sexual abusive experiences of participants before the age of 17 years with an adult or a person at least 5 years older or a person in a position of power.

Result: It shows an overall ($N = 414$) CSA prevalence rate of 54.2%. Only four factors

result. It shows an overall (IV = 11.1) CSA prevalence rate of 31.2%. Only four factors (from eight) – ethnicity not Northern Sotho, mother employed and not as laborer, a stepparent present in the family during childhood, and violence at home not seldom – significantly discriminated CSA from non-abuse. Increase in the number of combination of the four significant factors also increases the probability of the discrimination in a linear manner.

Conclusion: With some caution, we recommend the four significant risk factors for use while planning preventive strategies against childhood sexual abuse, and a massive campaign against child sexual abuse in the province. More job opportunities should be created in the province.



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Keywords

Childhood sexual abuse; South Africa

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