

ANALYSIS OF THE ATTITUDES OF THE PARENTS TOWARDS SEXUALLY ABUSED CHILDREN IN TERMS OF DIFFERENT VARIABLES

Derya Neval AYEKİN¹, Gülümser GÜLTEKİN AKDUMAN²

Bilim Uzmanı, TED Ankara Koleji Vakfı Özel Anaokulu, &
Gazi Üniversitesi, Gazi Eğitim Fakültesi, Okul Öncesi Öğretmenliği,
TURKEY.

deryanevalayekin@hotmail.com, gulumsergultekin@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

This research was conducted to examine the attitudes of the “parents towards children who are sexually abused”. The population of this study is the parents of the children between 36-60 months of age attending to officially independent nurseries in Etimesgut, Ankara during 2012-2013 school year. While sampling was determined, 5% sensitivity and 95% confidence interval was taken into consideration and Ryan’s formula (1995) was used to calculate sampling size. Accordingly, 354 parents were defined as research subjects whereas 210 parents constituted the sample of this research. In the study, in order to determine demographic characteristics of the parents, a “Personal Information Form” developed by the researcher was used and “Attitude Scales against Sexually Abused Children” was used to measure attitudes of the parents was used. The data obtained in the study was analyzed with t test and One-Way Variance Analysis (ANOVA) in accordance with the number of categories in the independent variables in SPSS 20 software package. Through statistics, significance level was chosen as 0,05. In conclusion, it was found that attitudes of parents towards sexually abused children did not show statistically significant difference depending on the gender of the parents, their experience with sexually abused children, educational status, their earlier training on child abuse ($p>0,05$); however ; statistically significant difference was found depending on the ages of the parents, their earlier training on child rights, their earlier training on child neglect and child abuse($p<0,05$).

Keywords: Sexual Abuse, Child Abuse and Neglect Attitude

INTRODUCTION

Sexual abuse is defined as a situation where an adult,, who is at least six years older than a child, uses a child for his sexual satisfaction or seeks to let the others use the child for such purposes by threat, force or by convincing the child. (Yıldırım Doğru, 2012, p. 74).

According to the definition made by World Health Organization (1999), “each one of the behaviors that may adversely affect the health, physical and psychosocial development of the child displayed by the country, the society or an adult intentionally or unintentionally” is evaluated within the scope of sexual abuse. Sexual abuse is a multidimensional public health concern that may be of interest for psychological, sociologic, medical, behavioral, legal aspects. It is highly important in terms of short and long term effects on both the child and the society (Friedman vd., 2011, s. 1490; Çelik, 2014, p.12).

Sexual abuse is one of the most difficult child abuse types to detect. Remaining under secrecy and cannot be revealed for most of the time, sexual abuse is an important phenomenon in terms of short and long term effects. Sexual attacks cause severe damages on children. First of all, it is noticed that the child's development is delayed and interrupted. Normal childhood development tends to give way to more aggrieved, damaged and fragile appearance as a result of the assault (İnan, 2010, p.1).

The effects of abuse on a child may vary depending on the relations between the child and the perpetrator, manner of sexual activity, use of violence, existence of bodily harm, child's age and developmental stage, mental and psychological development prior to trauma and reactions of the parents against the incident (Yalçınkaya, 2011, p. 20). Although sexual abuse is regarded as a public concern that may have adverse effects in the short and long term, it may also have adverse effects on child's emotional moods, depressive mood, sexual life and personality development. The reaction of the child against the trauma he experienced may reveal in short and long term (Serdar Taçyıldız, 2013, p.6).

It can be observed that children and adolescents who are the victims of sexual abuse may suffer from sexually transmitted diseases, unintended pregnancy, sexual problems and genital wounds. The prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases in sexually abused ranges between 2% and 7% in girls, while it is between 1% and 5% in boys. Chlamydia, genital warts and gonoredeen are common sexually transmitted diseases, whereas, human immune deficiency virus (HIV) and syphilis are rarely seen. In addition, many severe sexual health problems such as curettages, infertility, menstrual problems may be seen in sexually abused children. There may be bruises on vagina and anus, ruptured but healed hymen, apparent degradation in hymenal tissues, damage in lower back vagina and anal wounds depending on penetration (Er, 2010, p.24).

The common complaints that may reveal the sexual abuse may be stomachache, rectal bleeding, and story of falling off a horse, chronic and recurrent urinary tract infection as well as other somatic complaints and pregnancy. As the number of cases of sexual abuse reported to the forensic department is far from the exact figures, it is of great importance that the physicians examine all children and adolescents; and especially adolescent girls who have somatic disorders and nightmares, vaginal and rectal bleeding, foreign bodies condyloma acuminata, genital herpes, trichomoniasis, gonococcusvulvovaginitis and other sexually transmitted diseases in terms of sexual abuse in order to assess, detect and prevent sexual abuse (Uzun, 2013, p7).

When developmental profile of pre-school children who exposed to sexual abuse and neglect is considered, one of the most common disorders is speech retardation. And speech retardation may cause school failure in bigger children (Türk, 2010, p.19; Barth, Bernetz, Heim, Trelle ve Tonia, 2013,s.472).

Another important result of sexual abuse is that a child may lose his life during sexual abuse, although it is rare. In such cases, murder is not the basic intention, but it is resulted from closing the mouth and nose by hand or an object; or exerting pressure on neck, chest and abdominal area in order to break the resistance of the victim or prevent the victim from calling for help; however, some murders are found to have resulted from intentional act of the perpetrator through choking by hand or a rope, hitting a hard object to the head or hitting the ground to hide the victim that is the biggest criminal evidence (Serdar Taçyıldız, 2013, p.7; Bachar vd., 2014, s.7).

It is reported that the children exposed to sexual abuse have attachment problems and negative self-conception (Uzun, 2013, p.8). It is observed that self concept of a child and

sensation is disrupted and changed following sexual abuse (Yalçinkaya, 2011, p.22). Development of self-concept is closely associated with how the child is behaved during infancy and in subsequent periods. When a child is mistreated during early childhood period affect the self-concept development of the child and therefore causes formation of impaired self-concept. It is stated that self-worth (esteem) commonly encountered in studies, is the most distinct symptoms of depression and sexual abuse is effective cause leading depression Er, 2010, s.25; MacMillan, Tanaka, Duku, Vaillancourt ve Boyle, 2013, s. 17; Pérez-Fuentes vd., 2013, s. 23; Lipovsky ve Kilpatrick, 2013, s. 442).

Sexually abused children may have recurrent, irritating ideas, nightmares, problems in falling asleep, loss of concentration, burst of anger, intensive psychological reactions to the objects evoking the incident, tendency to suicide, feeling of insecurity towards the adults, and they may pull away their friends, abstain from talking about the people and images that remind the incident. It is stated that mental and emotional problems resulting from sexual abuse start directly after the abuse and cause long-lasting reactions as they are in different dimensions. Symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Acute Stress Disorder (ASD) match up with the behaviors the children display as a result of sexual abuse (Yalçinkaya, 2011, p.22).

Anxiety is one of the most common emotions that can be seen in victims of sexual abuse. It is reported that somatic symptoms such as chronic anxiety, sleep disorders, nightmares and headaches, stomachache, asthma, bladder inflammation, chronic pelvic pain are associated with anxiety and the symptoms are frequently observed in sexually abused children than those in not exposed to sexual abuse. Aggrieved children tend to suppress some emotions like shame, guilt, anger, worry that they cannot cope with. As such being the case, introverted behaviors, identity problems, psychotic emotions, eating disorders, alcohol and substance additions, weak ego, insecurity emotions may emerge. Many studies have revealed that adolescents, who run away from their homes and schools, live at loose ends, use of alcohol and drugs, neglect and damage themselves, probably have sexual abuse history (Er, 2010, p.27).

A sexually abused child is unhappy, his behaviors are extreme. They are either so squeamish or untidy. They may behave towards the foreigners extraordinarily; or they may act closely or be shy, and coward, or they may be very well-behaved or show provoking behaviors. It has been discovered that approximately 85-90% of those diagnosed with borderline personality disorder exposed to sexual abuse during childhood. Sexual abuse adversely affect the child's getting into contacts with people and his ability to maintain social relations (Yalçinkaya, 2011, p.23).

It is observed that the effects of sexual abuse on children may vary depending on the relations between the child and the perpetrator, manner of sexual activity, use of violence, existence of bodily harm, collaboration of the child, age, development stage and psychological development prior to trauma. Reactions of the parents to the incident may also play a dramatic role on the issue. The reactions of the child may reveal as fear, depression, attention deficit, hyperactivity disorder, secondary enuresis and encopresis, behavioral problems, school problems and sexual problems. Also, anger reactions, weak impulse control, challenge and resistance disorders may be observed in children exposing to incest. In addition, behaviors such as thumb sucking and nail biting can be seen frequently. Phobias, sleeping disorders, girls' feeling insecure near boys, anxiety, nausea, vomiting, stomachache and headache are other indicators may be observed (Ovayolu vd., 2007, p. 16).

Children are affected adversely from this assault regardless of duration of sexual abuse, intimacy with the perpetrator and their age. However, this impact reveals itself in line with the child's perception of the incident, reactions of the environment and emotional state prior to abuse. It is reported that sexually abused children may wet their beds and adhere to the caregiver in early periods, as well as other emotional and physical symptoms, which may be confused with sexual expression behaviors, sleep disorders, expression problems, anxiety disorders, depression, sexual identity crisis or attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder. It may also be seen that pre-school children may suffer from anxiety, nightmares and increase in sexual behaviors (Yılmaz, 2009, p.17).

Depression is observed in sexually abused children at a very higher rate along with suicide ideation and attempts to suicide. Major depression starting from adulthood is found to be associated with sexual abuse in childhood. Anger reaction, weak impulse control, oppositeness and oppositional defiant disorder may be frequently observed in sexually abused children. It is known that establishing interpersonal relations and ability to maintain social relations are also affected with sexual abuse. It is observed that such persons abstain from getting in contact with people or they tend to establish many expectant and controlling relationships. Both types of relations are far from functionality and often ends up with loneliness (isolation) (Taner and Gökler, 2004, p. 84).

Bahar et al. 2009) reported that there is a significant correlation between sexual abuse in childhood and self-destructive behaviors. (Özer, 2014, p.12). Ünal (2008) mentioned four adverse effects of sexual abuse on children; impaired sexuality, infidelity, helplessness and being stigmatized (Özer, 2014, p.12). Impaired sexuality is defined as sexual urge and attitudes progressing against the norms; betrayal phenomenon, being betrayed by a person whom the child loves and trusts through abusive behaviors and therefore feeling of insecurity, fear, worry etc, helplessness, and abuse happening outside the will and desire of the child resulting in anger, somatic disorders, psychological breakdown and fear of being stigmatized accompanied with negative emotions (guilt, valuelessness etc.) that attach to the sense of self in a way and therefore the individual perceive himself such

It is reported that a total isolation may occur when the first three effects are accompanied by stigmatization. Gershooof (2002) emphasized that childhood sexual abuse does not only cause physical and psychological problems, but also leads to certain other adverse effects problematizing the life of the adult; developmental disorders, sleep disorders, eating disorders, addiction to drug and alcohol, depression anxiety disorders, panic disorder, delinquency, increase in violent behaviors, self-destruction/ tendency to suicide and having his own children experience his traumatic history (Özer, 2014, s.12).

It is estimated that the studies conducted on this issue has only revealed 15% of the cases; due to psychological effects of the abuse, difficulties in judicial proceedings and secondary victimization that may occur at social level; however the prevalence of sexual abuse is much more than such rate (Çelik, 2014, p.14; Fergusson, McLeod ve Horwood, 2013, s. 671).

Although child sexual abuse has been known for ages, there has been an increase in child sexual abuse. It is reported that in the USA, 1,6 per thousand of the children and adolescents exposed to sexual abuse by 1998. Similar prevalence rates have been observed in epidemiological studies conducted in other countries (Ovayolu et al., 2007, p. 14).

Every year 150 million female and 73 million male children are raped or exposed to sexual violence in the world and perpetrators are found to be acquainted with or the relatives of the children (Akyüz, 2012, p. 512; Widom, Czaja ve Dutton,2014, s. 652).

Child sexual abuse is regarded as the most common and severe problem as it may affect everybody regardless of age, gender, socio-economic class and geographical region. Average age group of victimized children is 8-11. Researchers have found that the children between 4 and 9 constitute a higher risk group for sexual abuse. It is fact that reported incidents make up only some part of all known cases (İnan, 2010, s.5; Sperry ve Widom, 2013, s.420).

When breakdown of the children exposed to sexual abuse is analyzed by age; 30% of them is between 2 and 5, 40% is between 6-10 and 30% is between 11-17 age group. Female/male ratio of sexually abused children is 1/3. In domestic studies, the ratio of female/male has been found close. It has been also found that 96% of the offenders are male; while 80% is someone the child is familiar with (İnan, 2010, p.5).

It is worrisome that the rates found by the researchers concerning prevalence of child sexual abuse and frequency thereof. Sexual abuse is found to have no association with any socio-demographic groups and it is noted that sexual abuse can be seen at any socio-economic level. In studies carried out in developed countries, it is found that perpetrators are often males, while the rate of female perpetrators is relatively low. The findings supported by scientific studies have revealed that 40 million people in the United States of America and one in every 3 women in Canada are exposed to sexual abuse. It is also estimated that 100.000 children expose to sexual abuse each year in the United States. It is reported that sexual abuse has no association with any socio-demographic groups and that it can be seen at any socio-economic level (İnan, 2010, s.6; Stoltenborgh vd., 2011, s. 82).

In the countries with various cultures and economic conditions, child sexual abuse is considered as a common problem and efforts have been made to find out the prevalence of sexual abuse with official statistics as well as retrospective interviews with the groups at risk of sexual abuse. National Center for Child Abuse and Neglect have reported that there has been 322% increase in child sexual abuse cases since 1980 (Akkuş, 2014, p.12-13).

It is difficult to reach statistical data kept in a systematic way regarding prevalence of sexual abuse in Turkey since institutional statistics and limited number of field studies is not sufficient to reflect the overall situation. According to the crime statistics of the Ministry of Justice between 2008 and 2012, child sexual abuse cases has been on the rise continuously and between 2002 and 2012, there were 17.589 crimes concerning child sexual abuse, the region with the highest crime rate is the Marmara Region /29,1%) following Central Anatolia by 16,7%. As for cities, Istanbul is placed on top by 15% which is followed by Ankara around 6,1% (Akkuş, 2014, p.14)

Unfortunately, our country is in a poor condition concerning child sexual abuse. International statistics show that Turkey is ranked first especially child sexual abuse through internet and a study conducted in Turkey revealed that exposure to sexual abuse may happen as little as 1 year old (Köse Şahin, 2009, p. 2). As the studies on this issue in Turkey is relatively new, social ratios cannot be shown clearly. If the official records are kept and comprehensive studies are made, reliable data may be obtained. According to the results of the survey conducted by the Prime Ministry Social Service and Child Protection Agency on 2216 children in 6 provinces in 2008 with the support of Unicef; 10% of the children at 7 and 18 have witnessed sexual abuse of another child, 4% of such included sexual abuse of contact, 3% the children was exposed to sexual abuse and 0,5% of such included sexual abuse of contact (Zengin, 2014, p.19).

Impaired sexuality, betrayal phenomenon, helplessness and being stigmatized are some of the feelings of sexually abused children. As sexual issues are still regarded as taboo in our

country, and due to humiliating and condemning behaviors of family and public members towards sexually abused children increases the effects of the abuse on children and causes the children to lose their self confidence and self-esteem as well as feeling of confidence towards the adults. Attitudes against sexually abused children are of great importance in terms of reducing the effects of abuse on children and incorporating them into social life. It is believed that sexual abuse is the flight of imagination of the children, victims of sexual abuse are cute little girls and children who run away from their homes, parks, public toilets, desolated and dark streets, empty construction areas are used for sexual abuse, perpetrators are usually old males. However, children do not generally tell lies about sexual abuse and abuse is not the fault of the children. Boys and girls in every type of socio-economic and socio-cultural groups may expose to sexual abuse. The places where sexual abuse happens are commonly houses, schools and nearby environment between the houses and schools. In 80-95 of the cases, the perpetrators vary between 20 and 45 years of age and generally married males with children whom the child is familiar with (Yılmaz Doğru, 2012, p. 77).

This study was conducted to analyze the relations of the attitudes of the parents against sexually abused children by their ages, genders, educational status, their previous training on child rights and child abuse, and their previous experience of child sexual abuse. Variables defined in the study may allow a discussion over the effects of the attitudes of the parents against sexually abused children and pre-school teachers on children.

It is really important to analyze the attitudes of the parents, the closest individuals to the child in order to allow children not to have any problems of being socialized and to reduce the problems of being stigmatized and have them develop a healthy personality. When relevant studies are analyzed, we have found no study dealing with the attitudes of the parents against sexually abused children.

In the study, answers for the following are investigated;

- i. Attitudes of the parents against sexually abused children;
- ii. Ages,
- iii. Gender,
- iv. Educational status,
- v. Whether the parent have previous training on child rights?
- vi. Whether the parents have previous training on child abuse and negligence?
- vii. Whether the parents have training on child sexual abuse?
- viii. Have the attitudes of the parents differentiated depending on their experience on child sexual abuse?

METHOD

The model of this study where attitudes of the parents against sexually abused children is descriptive model. As the data were collected from previously selected population, the study is also a cross-sectional description. The study requires comparison between groups as well as descriptive techniques when analysis of data is concerned. Basically, it is a study looking for relations. Therefore, the study also uses relational screening model. (Seyidoğlu, 2009, p. 33-34).

The depending variable of the study is the attitudes of the parents who have pre-school children against sexually abused children. The independent variables of the study include “age, gender, educational status, previous training on the issue, encountering sexually abused children”.

Population and Sample

Stratified sample method was used in this study that was conducted to define attitudes of the parents against sexually abused children. With this aim, the population of the study was defined in Etimesgut district of Ankara province. The number of pre-school children at nurseries in Etimesgut district is 4555. Total number of schools in the region is 58. While selecting the sample from the population, 5% susceptibility and 95% confidence interval were taken into consideration. To calculate the sampling size, Ryan's formulae (1995) was used. In that case, the sampling of this study consists of parents of 354 children. As a result of stratified sampling, random sampling was carried for 3, 4 and 5 years respectively. During such sampling, children at every age group were considered.

Data Collection Techniques

A "Personal Information Form" was used to define personal characteristics of the parents and "Attitude Scale against Sexually Abused Children" was used to define the attitudes of the parents against sexually abused children as data collection tools. After the information form and the scale was delivered to the parents, 210 mothers and fathers were chosen for statistical analysis of the scale.

Personal Information Form for Parents: "Personal Information Form for Parents" developed by the researcher to find out demographic characteristics of the parents consists of information about the ages of the parents, their educational status, their previous training on child rights and child abuse, their previous experience with sexually abused children. The items in the personal information form are arranged in way that allows parents can complete in writing.

Attitude Scale against Sexually Abused Children: The scale was developed by Gültekin Akduman and Cantürk (2010) to measure the attitudes of the people against sexually abused children. The scale consists of 19 items (13 positive and 6 negative) and it is a 5 point-Likert type scale. The choices include "I totally agree", "I agree", "I am not sure", "I don't agree" and "I don't agree at all". Positive items in the scale are scored up from 1 to 5, and negative items from 5 to 1 starting from the choice "I don't agree at all". The highest score that may be obtained from the scale is 95, the lowest is 19 (Gültekin Akduman and Cantürk, 2010, p. 25).

Data Analysis

The data obtained in the study was analyzed with t Test and One-Way Variance Analysis (ANOVA) for independent samples according to the number of categories in independent variables to find out whether scores of the parents participated to the study change depending on various demographic features. With the aim of analyzing significant differences found, Bonferroni test was applied. Through statistics, significance level was taken as 0,05. Prior to analysis, lost value and extreme value were evaluated in data set and no lost value and extreme value was found.

FINDINGS

T test was used for independent sampling to find out whether the scores of the parents obtained from Attitude Scale against sexually abused children differentiate depending on their experience with sexually abused children and Single-Way Variance Analysis was used to find out whether the scores of the parents differentiate depending on their ages, their previous training on child rights, their previous training on child abuse and negligence and their previous training on child sexual abuse. The findings of the analysis are given in Tables 1 to 7.

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations and Results of t Test concerning the scores of the Parents in Attitude Scale against Sexually Abused Children by their ages

	N	X	SD
Female	163	82,227	9,759
Male	47	81,383	12,694
t Test Results	SD	t	P
	208	0,486	0,627

In Table 1, it is seen that encountering sexually abused children did not cause any significant difference in terms of attitude towards sexually abused children ($t(208)=0,486, p > 0,05$). The attitudes of the parents participated to the study are very close to each other. When means scores are examined, the mothers in the study got higher scores than fathers and they have more positive behaviors.

Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations and Results of t Test concerning the scores of the parents in Attitude Scale against the Sexually Abused Children depending on parents' experience in sexually abused children cases

	N	X	SD
No	187	81,700	10,386
Yes	23	84,782	10,891
T Test results	Sd	t	P
	208	1,336	0,183

In Table 2, it is seen that encountering sexually abused children did not cause any significant difference in terms of attitude towards sexually abused children ($t(208)=1,336, p > 0,05$). When mean scores are considered, the parents who encountered children exposed to sexual abuse got higher scores than those who did not encounter any child sex abuse cases.

Table 3. Means, Standard Deviations and Results of Variance Analysis concerning the scores of the Parents in Attitude Scale against Sexually Abused Children depending on ages of the parents

	N	X	SD
20-30	92	81,630	9,487
31-35	72	84,319	9,477
36 and over	46	79,282	12,962
Total	210	82,038	10,460
Results of Variance Analysis	Sd	F	P
Inter groups	2	3,457*	0,033
In groups	207		
Total	209		

* $p < 0, 05$

In Table 3, it is seen that ages of the parents made significant differences in terms of attitudes towards sexually abused children ($F(2-209): 3,457, p < 0,05$). According to the results of Bonferroni test, the attitudes of the parents between 31-35 years of age are statistically higher

than those of the parents over 36. When mean scores are examined, the parents between 31-35 got higher scores, while the parents at 36 and over got the lowest scores.

Table 4. Means, Standard Deviations and Results of Variance Analysis concerning the scores of the Parents in Attitude Scale against Sexually Abused Children depending on educational status of the parents

	N	X	SD
Primary School	45	79,511	13,775
Secondary School	28	80,392	9,565
High School	91	82,659	9,433
Associate Degree and over	46	84,282	8,706
Total	210	82,038	10,460
Variance Analysis Results	Sd	F	P
Inter groups	3	1,945	0,123
In groups	206		
Total	209		

In Table 4, educational status of the parents did not make any significant difference in terms of attitudes towards sexually abused children (F3-209: 1,945, $p > 0,05$). When mean scores are examined, the scores of parents with associate degree and over are higher than those of high school graduate parents; and the scores of the parents with high school degree are higher than those with primary school degree.

Table 5. Means, Standard Deviations and Results of Variance Analysis concerning the scores of the parents in Attitude Scale against Sexually Abused Children depending on whether parents previously received training on child rights

	N	X	SD
I have not received any training.	122	80,434	11,459
I obtained information on my own.	71	83,816	8,554
I have been trained on the subject.	17	86,117	8,045
Total	210	82,038	10,460
Results of Variance Analysis	Sd	F	P
Inter groups	2	3,856*	0,023
In groups	207		
Total	209		

* $p < 0, 05$

In Table 5, it is seen that whether parents have previous training on child rights made a significant difference in their attitudes towards sexually abused children (F2-209: 3,856, $p < 0,05$). According to the results of Bonferroni test, the scores of the attitudes of the parents not having previous training on the issue are statistically lower than the parent with previous training. When mean scores are examined, the scores of the parents obtaining information on their own are higher than the parents with no previous training on the issue.

Table 6. Means, Standard Deviations and Results of Variance Analysis concerning the scores of the parents in Attitude Scale against Sexually Abused Children depending on whether parents previously received training on Child Neglect and Child Abuse

	N	X	SD
I have not received training.	138	80,434	11,219
I obtained information on my own.	56	84,857	8,158
I have been trained on the subject.	16	86,000	7,797
Total	210	82,038	10,460
Results of Variance Analysis	Sd	F	P
Inter groups	2	4,985*	0,008
In groups	207		
Total	209		

* $p < 0, 05$

In Table 6, it is seen that whether parents have previous training on child negligence and child abuse made a significant difference in their attitudes towards sexually abused children ($F_{2-209}: 4,985, p < 0,05$). According to the results of Bonferroni test, the scores of the attitudes of the parents not having previous training on the issue are statistically lower than the parent with previous training. When mean scores are examined, the scores of the parents having previous training on the issue are higher than the parents obtaining information on their own and the scores of parents obtaining information are higher than those with no previous training.

Table 7. Means, Standard Deviations and Results of Variance Analysis concerning the scores of parents in Attitude Scale against Sexually Abused Children depending on whether parents previously received training on child sexual abuse

	N	X	SS
I have not received any training.	152	81,085	11,059
I obtained information on my own.	43	83,744	8,507
I have been trained on the subject.	15	86,800	7,360
Total	210	82,038	10,460
Results of Variance Analysis	Sd	F	P
Inter-groups	2	2,804	0,063
In-groups	207		
Total	209		

In Table 7, it is seen that whether parents have previous training on child sexual abuse did not make a significant difference in their attitudes towards sexually abused children ($F_{2-209}: 2,804, p > 0,05$). The scores of the attitudes of the parents having and not having previous training on the issue are very close to each other. When mean scores are examined, the scores of the parents having previous training on the issue are higher than the parents obtaining information on their own and the scores of parents obtaining information are higher than those with no previous training.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

It is found that the attitudes of the parents against sexually abused children did not make any significant difference by the ages of the parents. It is thought that parents who participated to the study developed similar attitudes as they answered the questions in the scale together, parents are first degree responsible for the healthy development of their children and parents who participated to the study share such responsibility. Although the attitudes of the parents against sexually abused children were very close to each other, the scores of mothers in the scale were found higher than those of the fathers. This is because mothers establish an emotional bond with their children, and they think that they are in charge of meeting the needs of their children from the moment they were born. As a result of study called "Factors and Dimensions of Child Sexual Abuse in Children working or living in the street" carried out Mersin city center in 2002, fathers are found to have abused the children most (Dönmez, 2009, p. 50). Yüksel (1993) studied on incest stories of 31 patients who applied to a psychiatry clinic between 1986 and 1992, and found 20 father-daughter incest stories and concluded fathers abused the children most within the family and such families were traditional families (Çağlarırnak, 2006, p. 21). It is good to find that attitudes of the fathers are similar to those of mothers in the study and it is thought that awareness of the fathers on the issue has increased. Today, family structure has shifted from being patriarchal to being child-centered and therefore parents seem to have developed more sensitive attitudes towards the basic needs and emotional development of the children and people tend to prefer core family structure rather than extended family. It is thought that since fathers have assumed the care of their children together with the mothers, their bonds with their children have reinforced and they start to develop more positive and therefore more sensitive behaviors towards individual and social problems

It is found that encountering sexually abused children did not cause any significant difference in terms of attitudes of the parents towards sexually abused children. It is reported that the attitudes of the parents who encountered or not encountered sexually abused children cases are very close to each other; however the scores of the parents who encountered child sexual abuse in the Attitude Scale are relatively higher than the scores of the parents who did not encounter any child sexual abuse. This may result from parents' developing more positive view towards sexually abused children as they have witnessed the severe problems of the children experienced following the incident and observed the difficulties in the process. The parents who encountered children exposed to sexual abuse develop very similar attitudes as the parents who did not encounter any child sex abuse cases have become more informed on the adverse effects of sexual abuse on the children thanks to large and frequent coverage on mass media such as internet and television to attract the attention of the community to the importance of the issue. It is thought that as the parents have become informed about the adverse effects of sexual abuse on children may influence their attitudes against sexually abused children in a positive way. Studies indicate that, attitudes against sexual abuse of girls and boys in our society are different from each other. It is thought that as the issue is dealt with frequently in mass media and adverse effects of sexual abuse on children are emphasized, this may affect the attitudes of the parents against sexually abused children and the society may become more informed about adverse effects of sexual abuse and thus, the point of view over sexual abuse may change. The studies reveal that attitudes against sexual abuse of girls and boys in our society are different from each other. Kozcu and Zeytinoglu (1989) reported in their study that those who witness sexual abuse of girls directly intervene the incident (Çağlarırnak, 2006, p.21).

It is found that the ages of the parents made significant differences in terms of attitudes towards sexually abused children. The attitudes of the parents between 31 and 35 years of age

are statistically higher than those of the parents over 36. When mean scores are examined, the parents between 31 and 35 got higher scores, while the parents at 36 and over got the lowest scores. It is thought that parents between 31 and 35 got higher scores than parents over 36 because the parents in this age group are more interested in all needs of child in terms of development and child bearing have turned to be more child-centered today and parents at 36 and over may spend much time with their children and join the activities of the child.

As the bonds between the parents whose sharing with their children has increased and their children grow stronger, the awareness of the parents on the issue has also increased and they tend to become more sensitive towards the problems that may be of interest to the children and therefore their attitudes are affected in a positive way. In the study, it is found that the scores of the parents between 20 and 30 years of age are very close to those of the parents between 31 and 35. Although the scores are very close to each other, the scores of the parents between 31 and 35 are higher than those of the parents between 20 and 30 as it is thought that becoming parents at early ages affects the attitudes against sexual abuse in a negative way. Becoming parents means having a child as well as many responsibilities and problems not known before. Being parents at an early age may bring some difficulties to overcome the problems and responsibilities of having a new individual without even completing their own development. The individuals not completing their own developments are in a period when they are more susceptible to mistakes and misdeeds; thus, it is thought that they are not only inclined to be abused and apply abuse but also they cause adverse effects on the children through abuse and they fail to develop more mature way of thinking about the problems influencing public health. It is reported in a study that the majority of the perpetrators constitutes the adults between 21 and 25 years of age and in another study, it is reported that approximately 45% of the rape convicts is below the age of 25; 30% is between the age of 18-23 (Serdar Taçyıldız, 2013, p. 58). It is also reported in a study that girls get married at an early age perceive physical abuse, emotional abuse and negligence and family problems when compared to the girls who do not get married at an early age (Çağlarırnak, 2006, p. 23). Bilir et al. (1991), In a study conducted in 16 provinces of Turkey between 1981-1982, 1985 and 1989 with 50.473 children between 4-12 years of age, the majority of the mothers who impose physical punishment is between 21-30 years of age (Dönmez, 2009).

It is found that educational status of the parents did not make any significant difference in terms of attitudes towards sexually abused children. When mean scores are examined, the scores of parents with associate degree and over are higher than those of high school graduate parents; and the scores of the parents with high school degree are higher than those with primary school degree. The scores of the parents in the Attitude Scale against Sexually Abused Children are very close to each other in all groups. It is thought that parents answered the questions in the scale with the feeling of being parents and having responsibilities in development and security of their children and they become informed about the adverse effects of the sexual abuse on children and difficulties sexually abused children may suffer from thanks to frequent coverage on internet and mass media. Although the scores of the parents at each educational status group are very close to each other, the scores obtained from the scale increase as educational status of the parents improves. The parents who got the highest scores in the scale are those with associate degree and over (X: 84,282). Through education, the ability of an individual to obtain correct information and to construe such information accurately increases. Thus, it is thought that the individuals may become more sensitive towards the society and social problems and develop more positive attitudes and behaviors. Studies conducted revealed that parents with low educational status tend to abuse their children more often. It cannot be expected that the parents who abused their children develop healthy attitudes towards sexually abused children. In his study, Çağlarırnak (2006)

observed that as educational level of the parents' increases, they tend to show more moderate discipline on their children and therefore educational status of the parents and level of abuse are inversely correlated. Kars (1994) have found that there is inverse correlation between educational level of the parents and child abuse (Saribaş, 2013). When child abuse cases which were forwarded to the judicial authorities are considered, educational status of the mothers (76%) and fathers (64%) of the children who are sexually abused were at primary school level (Çağlarırnak, 2006, p. 21). In his study, Yılmaz Irmak (2008) reported that, the potential of children of low educational level parents to expose sexual abuse is higher than the children of educated parents (Turk, 2010, p. 52). Although there is no study conducted on the attitudes against sexually abused children in the literature, it is a well known fact types of abuse are interrelated and they are often found together. When studies conducted on the issue are concerned based on this truth, the parents tend to abuse their children as their educational level decreases and normalize the abuse of their children based on fallacies in the society. Without doubt, such beliefs adversely affect the attitudes against the children. Kozcu and Zeytinoğlu (1989) found the opinion significant that as the level of education of the participants to the study increases, violence towards children is not beneficial (Çağlarırnak, 2006, p. 20-21). In his study, Dönmez (2009) reported significant difference in some statements in the questionnaire on solution recommendations that may be applied in prevention of abuse and negligence in the variable of educational status of parents and also found that participation of the parents at bachelor's degree level was higher than the parents at secondary school level.

It is found that the attitudes of the parents against sexually abused children made a difference statistically depending on whether they have previous training on child rights. The scores of the attitudes of the parents not having previous training on the issue are significantly lower than the parent with previous training. Child rights are common name of inherent rights of children and the rights aiming to protect them from abuse and negligence. It is thought that the parents in our society do not have sufficient information about the justification and enforcements of child rights. Approximately 60% (N:122) of the parents participated to the study notified that they did not have training on the issue. The parents who received training on child rights both have knowledge about the issue and aware of the fact that the children may have more different characteristics than the adults as they are in constant growth and development process. It may be concluded that trainings on the issue could raise the awareness of the parents on abuse and improve their attitudes against sexually abused children; besides, they could approach to the issue in a more scientific and accurate way. Furthermore, the study supports the idea that the scores of the parents who received information on their own are higher than the scores of the parents who did not receive any training on the issue.

It is found that the attitudes of the parents against sexually abused children were significantly different depending on whether the parents have previous training on child abuse and negligence. The scores of the attitudes of the parents not having previous training on the issue are statistically lower than the parent with previous training. It is thought that the parents are not sufficiently informed about child abuse and negligence and they do not know which behaviors fall within the scope of child abuse and negligence and how such behaviors give harm to the children. However, knowing what child abuse and negligence is; risk factors, causes, results and most importantly, about the symptoms is of great importance for the protection of the children from abuse and negligence for early intervention and response to save children with the lowest damage possible. Parents are the individuals who spent much time with their children and who know their children very well. Parents who received training on child abuse and negligence may take required measures for the safety of their children and

notice the changes in their children and response it accordingly. By this way, parents who received training on the issue know how they establish relations with the sexually abused children and may help them to reduce their problems in their social life by increasing their feeling of confidence. The parents who received training on the issue may have the chance to alter fallacies about child abuse and negligence that are common in the society. It is concluded that all such factors affect the attitudes of the parents against sexually abused children in a positive way and parents trained on the issue could develop more positive attitudes than those of the parents without any previous training. On the other hand, the parents who did not receive any training on the issue or have any information about it may tend to normalize the abuse exposed to children based on fallacies and in that case the development of the children could be affected adversely as well as their attitudes towards such children. Although there is no study found concerning attitudes against sexually abused children in the literature, types of abuse may interrelated and often seen together. In his study on violence against children within the family, Ayan (2007) found that 30% of the families tried to normalize the violence at school based on the thinking that the teachers are always right (Dönmez, 2009, p. 46).

It is further found that the attitudes of the parents against sexually abused children were not significantly different depending on whether the parents have previous training on child sexual abuse. When mean scores are examined, the scores of the parents having previous training on the issue are higher than the parents obtaining information on their own and the scores of parents obtaining information are higher than those with no previous training. Since prejudices on sex cannot be easily eliminated in our society, parents who distinguish sexual abuse from other types of abuse have become more sensitive towards this type of abuse. In addition, as mass media such as television, newspapers deal with sexual abuse frequently today as well as effects of sexual abuse on children in TV programs and columns and they tend to use criticizing and condemning language against the perpetrators and therefore the attraction of the parents is drawn to the sexual abuse cases and effects of sexual abuse on children. Akbaba Altun et al. (2006), scanned the news on the newspapers concerning violence at schools and they found that media reported violence cases including abuse and rape by using condemning and accusing language (Türk, 2010, s.41). It is thought that this situation positively affect the attitudes of the parents against the children. Although it is found that the attitudes of the parents are very close to each other, when mean scores are examined, it is revealed that the scores of the parents having previous training on the issue are higher than the parents obtaining information on their own and the scores of parents obtaining information are higher than those with no previous training and therefore their awareness about the issue has raised and affected their attitudes against sexually abused children in a positive way.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As sexual issues are still regarded as taboo in our country, and due to humiliating and condemning behaviors of family and public members towards sexually abused children increases the effects of the abuse on children and causes the children to lose their self confidence and self-esteem as well as feeling of confidence towards the adults. Attitudes against sexually abused children are of great importance in terms of reducing the effects of abuse on children and incorporating them into social life. It is thought that the attitudes developed against sexually abused children adversely affect common fallacies in the society concerning sexual abuse.

Recommendations to the Parents: Parents should be given training before they become parents and their awareness should be raised. It is believed that parents could contribute to a

great deal to the protection of their own children from abuse and negligence and to help sexually abused children incorporated into social life.

It is necessary to increase consultancy and support systems concerning parents and children in order to have them take the advantage of such training.

The parents should be trained in order to monitor development of their children and realize the changes in their developmental process.

The parents should be trained on communication skills in order to have them establish healthy relations with their children.

Recommendations to Teachers: When pre-school curriculum is analyzed, it is found that most of the candidate teachers have not been trained on child rights, child abuse and child's safety or such courses fall within the scope of elective courses. The contents of the courses on child abuse and negligence should be prepared by the relevant specialists and such courses should be made compulsory topics for candidate pre-school teachers.

It is necessary that curriculum of teaching departments should include courses on child abuse and negligence as well as child's safety and they should be made mandatory for all students at such departments.

Considering child abuse is unsolved public concern and we share every aspect of our lives with the children, the curriculum of all departments at universities should include courses on child safety. By this way, awareness of all stakeholders in the society could be increased.

Recommendations to Media Institutions: When the number of people that media could reach today and the influence of media in the society are taken into consideration as well as accessibility of media, there should be programs concerning child rights, child abuse and negligence for the parents and the children and accurate information should be given through articles and studies conducted on the issue. Television programs may be produced with the specialists in the area. Cartoons should be done for young children.

Recommendations to Public Institutions: Required research should be made by the relevant institutions, children who are at risk of sexual abuse and who are in need of protection should be closely monitored in order to protect them. If necessary, the number of such institutions should be increased.

Programs giving support to sexually abused children and their parents should be increased and children should be monitored regularly and most importantly, the safety of the children should be provided.

Laws on perpetrators should be regulated once again and legal obligations should be imposed on perpetrators. In such laws, the duties of each member in the society in order to protect the child and have them incorporate with the society should be clearly defined.

The institutions to be applied in the cases of child abuse should be defined in the government policies and information about application process should also defined and sanctions should be imposed on those who fail to notify when they witness such cases.

Recommendations to the Researchers: When relevant literature is reviewed, it is observed that there is not many studies on sexual abuse. It is thought that if researchers conduct more studies on sexual abuse, this might provide great contribution to the issue.

Researchers could also make studies about knowledge and awareness of the parents. They may also conduct a study to find out how the knowledge and awareness of the parents differentiate based on variables.

They could conduct studies on knowledge and awareness of the teachers and they may also conduct a study to find out how the knowledge and awareness of the teachers differentiate based on variables.

They may also study on effects of the attitudes of the parents against sexually abused children on children.

They may further study on effects of the attitudes of the teachers against sexually abused children on children.

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