



Child Sexual Abuse In Lebanon (CSA)

At the extreme end of the spectrum, sexual abuse includes sexual intercourse or its deviations. Yet all offenses that involve sexually touching a child, as well as non-touching offenses and sexual exploitation, are just as harmful and devastating to a child's wellbeing.

6.25 % (80 out of 1278) of the direct referrals made to himaya's specialized services indicated CSA. A much higher percentage was found during provision of care for children referred for physical, psychological abuse or various forms of neglect.

Touching sexual offenses include:

- Fondling
- Making a child touch an adult's sexual organs
- Penetrating a child's vagina or anus no matter how slight with a penis or any object that doesn't have a valid medical purpose.

Non-touching sexual offenses include:

- Engaging in indecent exposure or exhibitionism
- Exposing children to pornographic material
- Deliberately exposing a child to the act of sexual intercourse
- Masturbating in front of a child.

Sexual exploitation can include:

- Engaging a child or soliciting a child for the purposes of prostitution
- Using a child to film, photograph or model pornography

himaya, in collaboration with **Moms & to Be**, aims to break the silence on children abuse which is still considered a taboo. This section is to help you recognize different forms of abuse and stop them from happening to ensure the safety and welfare of a child.



Non exhaustive studies in Lebanon

1•2015 National Study on Child Abuse in Lebanon, conducted by Dar al Amal and the Ministry of Social Affairs amongst others

- The prevalence of sexual abuse in Lebanon is 4.1% over one year. It's probably much higher, but under-reported because it's a sensitive and taboo subject.
- Most at risk age is between 10 and 14 for both sexes.
- 49.4% of the time the abuser is someone from the child's close environment.
- The abuser is a family member in 55% of the cases, someone from school in 24.7% of the cases.
- The first sexual abuse regarding girls happens 66.7% of the time at home, and 48.8% of the time, in public places for boys.
- 38.2% of children who were abused, were abused repeatedly by the same person.
- Risk factors include being a victim of physical abuse (58.4%) or psychological abuse (70.4%).
- Lack of sexual education, referral pathways and safety nets represent clear risk factors.
- Children did not speak out about the abuse 49.4% of the time.
- Children who have been abused don't seem to learn how to protect themselves from the incident and are therefore more at risk.
- Children who have been abused more than once seem to put themselves more at risk than others and act impulsively.

2•2012 Study by Usta et al on a small sample of children "Child maltreatment: The Lebanese children's experiences."

- 65% experienced at least one incident of psychological abuse, whereas 54% experienced at least one incident of physical abuse.

3•2008 Study led by Usta et al. KAFA and Save the Children

- 16.1% of children surveyed admitted having experienced at least one form of sexual abuse.
- 54.1% of the children said they talked to someone about it, usually the mother.
- Sexual abuse cases towards girls are treated with greater secrecy and shame.
- Children are reluctant to reveal abuser's identity especially when it's a family member.
- 54% of the children interviewed are subject to physical violence, while 64% are subject to psychological violence and 41% are witnesses to violent acts occurring at home.
- Findings also illustrate a high correlation between domestic violence (physical violence, psychological violence and witnessing violence) and sexually abused children. Such correlations are well established in literature and recognized by the participants of the focus group discussions, who pointed out that a child raised in a violent family environment would seek love and care outside of his or her home and would subsequently be at a higher risk of sexual abuse.



4•World Health Organization survey of 5115 Lebanese students

- 74% were 13–15 years' old.
- 37% had been physically attacked by an adult family member in the previous month.
- 17% reported lifetime exposure to sexual harassment.
- Boys (20%) were more likely than girls (15%) to report CSA.

5•2003 study by Abu-Baker & Dwairy

- Cultural and religious factors present significant barriers to reporting CSA, particularly when victims may be sanctioned and blamed, or when knowledge of the incident can bring shame and dishonor to their families.

6•1996 study by Chemaly & al

- 193 Lebanese children victims of CSA found their abusive experiences were associated with family disruption, substance abuse and psychopathology.
- Risk factors were also strongly correlated with population density and poverty, dysfunctional peer relationships, and school dropout rates.

Protection Law: law 422/2002

It defines a unified protection system for any child/minor on the Lebanese territory.

Lebanese law gives the judicial authority the power to interfere whenever a child's interest is at risk. The following situations may trigger judicial action for imposing protective or corrective measures whenever a child:

- Is in an environment exposing him to exploitation, or adversely affecting the child's health, safety, morality, or upbringing.
- Is exposed to sexual or violent corporal attack beyond the customary non-harmful disciplinary measures.
- Is found in a state of mendacity or vagrancy (article 25)

In any of these situations the juvenile judge has the discretion of taking whatever measures deemed necessary for the protection of the child, including rehabilitative measures when appropriate.

Pursuant to article 26 of law no. 422/2002, any person knowing that a child is exposed to maltreatment can report it.



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