



THE CHALLENGES FACED BY SCHOOL COUNSELLORS IN THE REPORTING OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Ibrahim S. Esinⁱ,
Mustafa T. Sener,
Onur B. Dursun,
Esra O. Asikhasanoglu,
Ismail Secer
Ataturk University,
Erzurum, Turkey

Abstract:

Identifying and reporting sexually abused children is one of the most important responsibilities of school counsellors. In this study, we aimed to determine the challenges of reporting child sexual abuse. We used a questionnaire form that was prepared by reviewing the literature about reporting sexual abuse. Participants were asked to state their level of knowledge of child sexual abuse, whether they had encountered such cases, whether they faced any challenges when notifying to authorities, and the possible solutions to problems encountered during this process. Of the school counsellors contacted, 40.9% of the participants stated that they encountered a claim of child sexual abuse at least once, but the majority of them (47.4%) could not report it to judicial authorities because of various reasons; such as being unsure whether the event was really happening, anticipating reactions towards them or school management, and fearing the school's loss of reputation in the case of disclosure.

Keywords: school counsellors, child, sexual abuse, reporting

1. Introduction

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is defined as any behavior towards a child that is performed for sexual stimulation and satisfaction by an adult ([Herrmann, Banaschak, Csorba, Navratil, & Dettmeyer, 2014](#)). According to a systematic review evaluating studies from 24 countries, it is estimated that the overall prevalence of CSA is 3-17% in boys and 8-31% in girls ([Barth, Bermetz, Heim, Trelle, & Tonia, 2013](#)). In Turkey, although studies with nationwide samples are insufficient, frequency of CSA is estimated to be between 9-13% ([Bahar, Savaş, & Bahar, 2009](#); [Fis, Arman, Kalaca, & Berkem, 2010](#)). Sexual abuse against

ⁱ Correspondence: email esinibrahimselcuk@gmail.com

children frequently goes unreported, as many children do not disclose such events. Therefore, it is believed that the rates of CSA are actually rather higher than the values reported in the literature. Some researchers have provided compelling evidence indicating that only 38% of CSA cases are detected ([Green, 2008](#); [London, Bruck, Ceci, & Shuman, 2005](#); [Ullman, 2007](#)).

CSA has a negative influence on the psychological well-being and educational function of school-age children. In the school setting, children can be observed closely by teachers, therefore, teachers may be able to notice early changes in the attitudes of children. Therefore, teachers play a substantial role in the process of disclosure by being aware of psychological and/or behavioural changes in victims. Consequently, the majority of notifications for CSA incidents to the authorities have conducted by professionals employed in school settings ([Behun, Cerrito, Delmonico, & Kolbert, 2019](#); [Hu et al., 2018](#); [Meinck, Cluver, & Boyes, 2017](#); [Organization, 2003](#)).

In Turkey, the school counsellor is called school psychologist, as their education includes the psychosocial development characteristics of children, thus, they are also experienced in evaluating the psychological characteristics of children and they also may be considered to have more responsibility in the determination of CSA compared to other teachers. Similar to other countries in Turkey's educational system, school counsellors have the most accountability among all teachers in the suspicion, reporting, and prevention of sexual abuse in schools ([Jill K Bryant, 2009](#); [Sivis-Cetinkaya, 2015b](#); [Zollner, Fuchs, & Fegert, 2014](#)). Many countries including Turkey have incorporated obligatory laws regarding the reporting of sexual abuse. Therefore, as is the case with all public personnel, including school counsellors are obligated to report suspected cases of child abuse and negligence and a failure to report child sexual abuse suspicion may result in criminal and civil legal liability. Suspicion, even without disclosure, has been defined to be sufficient for reporting CSA in the Turkish Criminal Code and the reporting law leaves the final determination as to whether or not abuse occurred to the prosecutors, not the reporters ([Code, 2004](#); [Mathews, 2019](#); [McRae, 2016](#); [Remley & Herlihy, 2014](#); [Sivis-Cetinkaya, 2015b](#)).

In the literature; it was reported that there were many difficulties in reporting the sexual abuse to the judicial authorities and that many school counselors did not report the CSA because of reservations about the incidents that may occur after the notification ([J. Bryant & Milsom, 2005](#); [J. D. G. Goldman & Padayachi, 2002](#); [Lambie, 2005](#)). Identifying and understanding factors that inhibit CSA reporting have the potential to facilitate earlier reporting, assist survivors to receive services without delay, and potentially prevent further sexual victimization. In Turkey, there are very limited studies about the difficulties encountered in the reporting process of sexual abuse to the authorities. In this regard, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1) What kind of challenges that school counsellors faced when reporting sexual abuse to judicial authorities? and What are the factors associated with these challenges?
- 2) Whether the local challenges indicated in our study differ from those mentioned in the international literature.

2. Material and Methods

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is defined as any behavior towards a child that is performed for sexual stimulation and satisfaction by an adult ([Herrmann, Banaschak, Csorba, Navratil, & Dettmeyer, 2014](#)). According to a systematic review evaluating studies from 24 countries, it is estimated that the overall prevalence of CSA is 3-17% in boys and 8-31% in girls ([Barth, Bermetz, Heim, Trelle, & Tonia, 2013](#)). In Turkey, although studies with nationwide samples are insufficient, frequency of CSA is estimated to be between 9–13% ([Bahar, Savaş, & Bahar, 2009](#); [Fis, Arman, Kalaca, & Berkem, 2010](#)). Sexual abuse against children frequently goes unreported, as many children do not disclose such events. Therefore, it is believed that the rates of CSA are actually rather higher than the values reported in the literature. Some researchers have provided compelling evidence indicating that only 38% of CSA cases are detected ([Green, 2008](#); [London, Bruck, Ceci, & Shuman, 2005](#); [Ullman, 2007](#)).

CSA has a negative influence on the psychological well-being and educational function of school-age children. In the school setting, children can be observed closely by teachers, therefore, teachers may be able to notice early changes in the attitudes of children. Therefore, teachers play a substantial role in the process of disclosure by being aware of psychological and/or behavioural changes in victims. Consequently, the majority of notifications for CSA incidents to the authorities have been conducted by professionals employed in school settings ([Behun, Cerrito, Delmonico, & Kolbert, 2019](#); [Hu et al., 2018](#); [Meinck, Cluver, & Boyes, 2017](#); [Organization, 2003](#)).

In Turkey, the school counsellor is called school psychologist, as their education includes the psychosocial development characteristics of children, thus, they are also experienced in evaluating the psychological characteristics of children and they also may be considered to have more responsibility in the determination of CSA compared to other teachers. Similar to other countries in Turkey's educational system, school counsellors have the most accountability among all teachers in the suspicion, reporting, and prevention of sexual abuse in schools ([Jill K Bryant, 2009](#); [Sivis-Cetinkaya, 2015b](#); [Zollner, Fuchs, & Fegert, 2014](#)). Many countries including Turkey have incorporated obligatory laws regarding the reporting of sexual abuse. Therefore, as is the case with all public personnel, including school counsellors are obligated to report suspected cases of child abuse and negligence and a failure to report child sexual abuse suspicion may result in criminal and civil legal liability. Suspicion, even without disclosure, has been defined to be sufficient for reporting CSA in the Turkish Criminal Code and the reporting law leaves the final determination as to whether or not abuse occurred to the prosecutors, not the reporters ([Code, 2004](#); [Mathews, 2019](#); [McRae, 2016](#); [Remley & Herlihy, 2014](#); [Sivis-Cetinkaya, 2015b](#)).

In the literature; it was reported that there were many difficulties in reporting the sexual abuse to the judicial authorities and that many school counselors did not report the CSA because of reservations about the incidents that may occur after the notification ([J. Bryant & Milsom, 2005](#); [J. D. G. Goldman & Padayachi, 2002](#); [Lambie, 2005](#)). Identifying and understanding factors that inhibit CSA reporting have the potential to facilitate

earlier reporting, assist survivors to receive services without delay, and potentially prevent further sexual victimization. In Turkey, there are very limited studies about the difficulties encountered in the reporting process of sexual abuse to the authorities. In this regard, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1) What kind of challenges that school counsellors faced when reporting sexual abuse to judicial authorities? and What are the factors associated with these challenges?
- 2) Whether the local challenges indicated in our study differ from those mentioned in the international literature.

3. Results

Participants' mean age was 29.5 ± 5.1 years, and their mean occupational experience was 5.6 ± 4.5 years. Of the participant group, 63.4% ($n = 59$) were male and 36.6% ($n = 34$) were female. In table 1 was given separately answers of the male and female school counsellors on the questionnaire form regarding the definition and scope of CSA, responsibilities towards sexual abuse and level of knowledge about legal obligations. In this study, 83.8% ($n = 78$) of the participants stated that their university education did not provide sufficient information about the CSA. School counsellors respectively stated that their available sources of information on CSA were as follows: internet resources, university education, individual experiences, information obtained from visual media, and in-service training. A majority of the school counsellors, 79.6% ($n = 74$), stated that they were not taught structured training regarding CSA other than what they had been taught in university. Figure 1 shows the participants' proposals aimed at increasing their level of knowledge in CSA. Furthermore, 40.9% ($n = 38$) of the participants stated that they encountered a claim of CSA at least once during their occupation. They stated that, in these events, the elements that restricted them most were: the emotional burden of the incident, the nature of psychological support which had to be given to the victim after the incident, and communication problems with other institutions and authorities on the subject. Among the school counsellors who encountered a claim of CSA at least once during their occupation, 47.4% ($n = 18$) stated that they had not reported incidents to judicial authorities, despite their suspicions that an evaluation to determine the presence of CSA would have been appropriate. They described the reasons for not reporting CSA were as follows; being unsure whether the event was really happening, anticipating adverse reactions towards them or the school administration, and fearing the school's loss of reputation in the case of disclosure. Also, although there was no statistical difference in the occupational experiences of male and female school counsellors ($p > 0.05$), it was determined that female school counsellors prepared fewer reports than male school counsellors, despite their suspicion (female 75% ($n = 12$), male 27.3% ($n = 6$), $p = 0.004$, $X^2 = 8.464$). The female school counsellors stated that their primary reason for not reporting was being unsure whether the event was really happening. Almost all the participants, 92.5% ($n = 86$), stated that there was no action plan for CSA at their institution. The last question in the questionnaire was, "Would you want to participate

in educational activities on the prevention of and judicial obligations related to the CSA?"; remarkably, 79.6% (n = 74) of the school counsellors answered that they want to attend.

4. Discussion

The awareness of CSA is gradually increasing throughout the world. However, studies do not confirm that mandatory reporting law contribute to higher numbers of disclosed CSA cases both in Turkey and in other countries ([Wesley B Crenshaw, Lucinda M Crenshaw, & James W Lichtenberg, 1995b](#); [J. D. Goldman & Padayachi, 2005](#); [O'Toole, Webster, O'Toole, & Lucal, 1999](#); [Tugay, 2008](#); [Walsh, Mathews, Rassafiani, Farrell, & Butler, 2012](#)). School counsellors interact with students on a daily basis, thereby placing them in unique positions to detect, report, and prevent child abuse and neglect and in Turkey similar to other countries, they assume high responsibility in reporting CSA cases ([Behun, et al., 2019](#); [Sikes, Remley Jr, & Hays, 2010](#); [Sivis-Cetinkaya, 2015b](#)). Limited research is available to document the factors affecting reporting for school counsellors and in these researches stated that there are some barriers to reporting CSA ([Behun, et al., 2019](#); [Tillman et al., 2015](#)). The present study investigated the level of awareness of school counsellors in reporting CSA to judicial authorities and their solutions for overcoming challenges during this process.

The school counsellors included in this study stated that they had little education on CSA coverage, responsibilities and legal obligations during their time as a student in their university, which was similar to previous studies ([J. D. Goldman & Padayachi, 2005](#); [Lokeman, 2011](#)). Additionally, school counsellors stated that their university education did not equip them with the required capabilities to handle CSA incidents; therefore, they benefitted from the internet and other resources to increase their knowledge about CSA. These results show that school counsellors do not have enough knowledge about CSA and also their responsibilities and legal obligations.

It has been estimated that only 38% of sexual abuse cases are detected and reported ([London, et al., 2005](#); [Ullman, 2007](#)). Nearly half of our participants stated that they had encountered a CSA claim at least once throughout their career. One of the biggest challenges teachers may face is the fact of not knowing how to behave when a student disclosure of a CSA situation ([Wesley B Crenshaw, Lucinda M Crenshaw, & James W Lichtenberg, 1995a](#)). In our study, participants stated that the challenges that they were faced in these events, the emotional burden of the incident, the nature of psychological support which had to be given to the victim after the incident, and communication problems with other institutions and authorities on the subject.

A deficiency in training leaves many mandated reporters with a lack of understanding the signs and symptoms of child abuse ([Alvarez, Kenny, Donohue, & Carpin, 2004](#); [Kalichman, 1999](#)). Due to a lack of knowledge regarding child abuse, mandated child abuse reports are potentially not made ([Knox et al., 2014](#)). School counsellors have stated that they need sound evidence that sexual abuse is taking place. A study found that less than 10% of school counsellors considered themselves sufficiently

familiar with symptoms of sexual abuse ([J. D. Goldman & Padayachi, 2005](#)). This may be the reason why more evidence is needed.

It is thought that, despite a legal obligation to notify authorities, a considerable number of abuse cases encountered by teachers are not reported ([Lusk, Zibulsky, & Viesel, 2015](#); [Sivis-Cetinkaya, 2015a](#)). In a study in Turkey, 22.8% of the preschool teacher did not report CSA during professional life even they suspected ([Akgül, 2015](#)). In another study, 25% of teachers had reported that they believed abuse may have happened but did not file any reports ([Kenny & McEachern, 2002](#)). Similar to the literature, 47.4% of the participants stated that they had not filed reports to judicial authorities even when they were suspicious. Many studies have investigated the reasons behind this failure to report, despite the legal obligation to notify authorities ([Koca, 2012](#); [Mathews, 2011](#); [Remley & Herlihy, 2007](#); [Sivis-Cetinkaya, 2015a, 2015b](#)). A major reason cited for the low number of abuse reports is the fact that authorities have insufficient knowledge about recognizing and reporting abuse ([Baginsky, 2003](#)). In one study determined that most teachers did not have adequate information about standard abuse reporting procedures and that some did not report due to fear of misrepresentation, despite the suspicion of abuse ([Kenny, 2001](#)). In another study, it was determined that the most important determinant of reporting was the level of the suspicion of abuse ([Behun, et al., 2019](#)). Bryant and Milsom (2005) studied two hundred and sixty-three school counsellors to examine their experiences of reporting child abuse and determined that lack of evidence was a major barrier to reporting ([J. Bryant & Milsom, 2005](#)). The other reason for this situation, some school staff indicate that school administrators make obstacles to reporting ([Crosson-Tower, 2003](#)). And also, school administrators have been reported to try and keep the school's name out of official papers in order to avoid be labelled with CSA ([Sivis-Cetinkaya, 2015b](#)). Similarly, researchers indicated adverse consequences for the reporter (e.g., fear of perpetrator, fear of repercussions) as an important obstacle to reporting CSA ([Alvarez, et al., 2004](#); [J. D. Goldman & Grimbeek, 2015](#)). It appears that the concerns expressed in our study are consistent with the literature. In our study, it appears that the causes of these reporting failures included being unsure whether the event was really happening, anticipating reactions towards them or school management, and fearing the school's loss of reputation in the case of disclosure. And also, most of the participants stated that they do not have sufficient information about CSA.

Although there was no difference the level of the knowledge of CSA between female and male school counsellors in our study, female school counsellors filed fewer reports than male school counsellors, primarily because they were unsure whether the event was really happening. In literature, there is also evidence that the gender of the reporter may affect the reporting decisions ([Crenshaw, et al., 1995a](#)). Some studies have also suggested that females have stricter normative standards in judging child abuse than males ([O'Toole, et al., 1999](#)).

5. Conclusions and Limitations

Schools are an important source of reporting cases of sexual abuse to judicial authorities. Legal arrangements concerning guidance and psychological counselling services in Turkey seem to emphasize the need for early intervention and developmental/protective measures to prevent CSA. In this context, school counsellors play a crucial role in detecting sexual abuse as well as preventing it from occurring. As shown in Figure 1, more than half of the participants recommend in-service training courses to increase their knowledge of sexual abuse. In school settings, research suggests that in-service education is effective at increasing the knowledge of mandated reporters in the areas of reporter responsibilities, reporting procedures, and the law ([Jill K Bryant & Baldwin, 2010](#); [Feng, Wu, Fetzer, & Chang, 2012](#)). Therefore, prioritizing the delivery of multidisciplinary in-service training to school counsellors may contribute to finding a solution to this problem. And also, under the leadership of these counsellors, it is possible to increase teachers' awareness of child sexual abuse.

Almost all participants stated that there is no action plan about CSA for how the obligation of notification will be fulfilled and how the child will be approached at their institution. While the problems experienced here should be solved institutionally, typically, they end up being resolved individually by the teachers, and as an expected consequence, many problems to arise. Bryant (2009) found that one of the strongest influences in deciding to report CSA was the school counsellors' commitment to follow the law. Unfortunately, article 279 of the Turkish Penal Code holds public officials responsible for notification if CSA is suspected, but the procedure for how to make that notification in Turkey is unclear. It is considered that clearing the uncertainties in the procedure and defining them clearly can contribute to the facilitation of the process as well as increase the number of reported cases.

School counsellors have stated that they need sound evidence that sexual abuse is taking place. Thus, school counsellors first need to increase their ability to recognize abuse signs. When the evidence of abuse is unclear or unconvincing and the willingness to report is decreased, training was found to increase the likelihood to appropriately report ([Hawkins & McCallum, 2001](#)). The fact remains that, the reporting law leaves the final determination as to whether or not abuse occurred to the investigators, not the reporters. The law considers suspicion of abuse sufficient for reporting. Therefore, school counsellor must understand that in the capacity as a mandated reporter, they are not evidence collectors or investigators of CSA ([Behun, et al., 2019](#)). On the other hand, concerns about consequences of mandated reports have been found to potentially inhibit making a report of suspected CSA. The findings of our study indicate that there is an urgent need for a nationwide action plan to raise awareness about the reporting and prevention of CSA. Otherwise, sexually abused children may not receive the support they require, perpetrators will not be identified, and new victimization may occur ([Alaggia, Collin-Vézina, & Lateef, 2019](#)).

Our study has some limitations. Firstly, this study is based on a questionnaire and includes all the limitation of such studies. Secondly, the results of this study may not be

completely generalizable due to the possible differences in the CSA-associated knowledge of other cohorts of school counsellors. Lastly, the findings of our study are difficult to discuss at the national level, because there are a few studies in Turkey that can be compared with ours. For future study for instance specifically the characteristics of unreported cases (as gender, characteristics and severity of sexual abuse) and other demographic factors of school counsellors influencing reporting behaviors may be asked. And also, parental involvement in therapeutic settings is known to influence whether a mandated reporter decides to report suspected child abuse. Features of parents can also be questioned.

6. Acknowledgements

No acknowledgments.

Also, this manuscript was not funded.

About the Author(s)

Ibrahim S. Esin, Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Ataturk University Faculty of Medicine.

Mustafa T. Sener, Department of Forensic Medicine, Ataturk University Faculty of Medicine.

Onur B. Dursun, Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Ataturk University Faculty of Medicine.

Esra O. Asikhasanoglu, Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Ataturk University Faculty of Medicine; **Ismail Secer**, Department of Educational Sciences, Ataturk University. Esra O. Asikhasanoglu is now at Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry in Necip Fazıl State Hospital, Kahramanmaraş, Turkey.

Ibrahim S. Esin, Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine, Ataturk University, Erzurum, Turkey.

References

- Akgül, E. (2015). Okul Öncesi Eğitim Kurumlarında Çalışan Personelin Cinsel İstismar Bildirim Durumları.
- Alaggia, R., Collin-Vézina, D., & Lateef, R. (2019). Facilitators and barriers to child sexual abuse (CSA) disclosures: A research update (2000–2016). *Trauma, Violence, Abuse, 20*(2), 260-283.
- Alvarez, K. M., Kenny, M. C., Donohue, B., & Carpin, K. M. (2004). Why are professionals failing to initiate mandated reports of child maltreatment, and are there any empirically based training programs to assist professionals in the reporting process? *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 9*(5), 563-578.
- Baginsky, M. (2003). Newly qualified teachers and child protection: A survey of their views, training and experiences. *Child Abuse Review, 12*(2), 119-127.

- Bahar, G., Savaş, H. A., & Bahar, A. (2009). Çocuk istismarı ve ihmali: bir gözden geçirme. *Fırat Sağlık Hizmetleri Dergisi*, 4(12), 51-65.
- Barth, J., Bermetz, L., Heim, E., Trelle, S., & Tonia, T. (2013). The current prevalence of child sexual abuse worldwide: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Int J Public Health*, 58(3), 469-483. doi: 10.1007/s00038-012-0426-1
- Behun, R. J., Cerrito, J. A., Delmonico, D. L., & Kolbert, J. B. (2019). The Influence of Personal and Professional Characteristics on School Counselors' Recognition and Reporting of Child Sexual Abuse.
- Bryant, J., & Milsom, A. (2005). Child Abuse Reporting by School Counselors. *Professional School Counseling*, 9(1), 63-71. doi: 10.5330/prsc.9.1.j244x1902344353h
- Bryant, J. K. (2009). School counselors and child abuse reporting: A national survey. *Professional School Counseling*, 12(5), 2156759X0901200501.
- Bryant, J. K., & Baldwin, P. A. (2010). School counsellors' perceptions of mandatory reporter training and mandatory reporting experiences. *Child Abuse Review*, 19(3), 172-186.
- Code, C. (2004). Failure of public officer in notification of an offense. Article 278.
- Crenshaw, W. B., Crenshaw, L. M., & Lichtenberg, J. W. (1995a). When educators confront child abuse: An analysis of the decision to report. *Child abuse neglect*, 19(9), 1095-1113.
- Crenshaw, W. B., Crenshaw, L. M., & Lichtenberg, J. W. (1995b). When educators confront child abuse: An analysis of the decision to report. *Child abuse & neglect*, 19(9), 1095-1113.
- Crosson-Tower, C. (2003). The role of educators in preventing and responding to child abuse and neglect.
- Feng, J. Y., Wu, Y. W. B., Fetzer, S., & Chang, H. Y. (2012). Contextual Effects on Kindergarten Teachers' Intention to Report Child Abuse. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 40(7), 886-890.
- Fis, N. P., Arman, A., Kalaca, S., & Berkem, M. (2010). Psychiatric evaluation of sexual abuse cases: A clinical representative sample from Turkey. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 32(10), 1285-1290.
- Goldman, J. D., & Grimbeek, P. (2015). Preservice teachers' sources of information on mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse. *Journal of child sexual abuse*, 24(3), 238-258.
- Goldman, J. D., & Padayachi, U. K. (2005). Child sexual abuse reporting behaviour by school counsellors and their need for further education. *Health Education Journal*, 64(4), 302-322.
- Goldman, J. D. G., & Padayachi, U. K. (2002). School Counsellors' Attitudes and Beliefs about Child Sexual Abuse. *Journal of Family Studies*, 8(1), 53-73. doi: 10.5172/jfs.8.1.53
- Green, E. J. (2008). Reenvisioning Jungian analytical play therapy with child sexual assault survivors. *International Journal of Play Therapy*, 17(2), 102.
- Hawkins, R., & McCallum, C. (2001). Effects of mandatory notification training on the tendency to report hypothetical cases of child abuse and neglect. *Child Abuse*

- Review: Journal of the British Association for the Study Prevention of Child Abuse Neglect*, 10(5), 301-322.
- Herrmann, B., Banaschak, S., Csorba, R., Navratil, F., & Dettmeyer, R. (2014). Physical examination in child sexual abuse: Approaches and current evidence. *Deutsches Ärzteblatt International*, 111(41), 692.
- Hu, M.-H., Huang, G.-S., Huang, J.-L., Wu, C.-T., Chao, A.-S., Lo, F.-S., & Wu, H.-P. (2018). Clinical characteristic and risk factors of recurrent sexual abuse and delayed reported sexual abuse in childhood. *Medicine*, 97(14).
- Institute, T. S. (2018). Address Based Population Registration System. .
- Kalichman, S. C. (1999). *Mandated reporting of suspected child abuse: Ethics, law, & policy*: American Psychological Association.
- Kenny, M. C. (2001). Child abuse reporting: Teachers' perceived deterrents. *Child abuse & neglect*, 25(1), 81-92.
- Kenny, M. C., & McEachern, A. G. (2002). Reporting suspected child abuse: A pilot comparison of middle and high school counselors and principals. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 11(2), 59-75.
- Knox, B. L., Starling, S. P., Feldman, K. W., Kellogg, N. D., Frasier, L. D., & Tiapula, S. L. (2014). Child torture as a form of child abuse. *Journal of Child Adolescent Trauma*, 7(1), 37-49.
- Koca, M. (2012). Çocuk İstismarında İhbar Yükümlülüğü. *İnönü Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi*, 3(1), 113-128.
- Lambie, G. W. (2005). Child abuse and neglect: A practical guide for professional school counselors. *Professional School Counseling*, 249-258.
- Law, J. P. (2005). Law No : 5395 Article 3.
- Lokeman, K. S. (2011). *Trauma Training for School Counselors: How Well Do Programs Prepare?* : Regent University.
- London, K., Bruck, M., Ceci, S. J., & Shuman, D. W. (2005). Disclosure of child sexual abuse: What does the research tell us about the ways that children tell? *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 11(1), 194.
- Lusk, V. L., Zibulsky, J., & Viezel, K. (2015). Child maltreatment identification and reporting behavior of school psychologists. *Psychology in the Schools*, 52(1), 61-76.
- Mathews, B. P. (2011). Teacher education to meet the challenges of child sexual abuse. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 36(11), 13-32.
- Mathews, B. P. (2019). Mandatory reporting laws and child sexual abuse.
- McRae, R. A. (2016). Child Abuse: Signs, Symtoms, and The Role of The School Counselor. *Paper. Master of Science Degree in Counselor Education Winona State University Spring*
- Meinck, F., Cluver, L. D., & Boyes, M. E. (2017). Longitudinal predictors of child sexual abuse in a large community-based sample of South African youth. *Journal of interpersonal violence*, 32(18), 2804-2836.
- O'Toole, R., Webster, S. W., O'Toole, A. W., & Lucal, B. (1999). Teachers' recognition and reporting of child abuse: A factorial survey. *Child abuse & neglect*, 23(11), 1083-1101.
- Organization, W. H. (2003). Guidelines for medico-legal care of victims of sexual violence.

- Remley, T. P., & Herlihy, B. (2007). *Ethical, legal, and professional issues in counseling*: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Remley, T. P., & Herlihy, B. (2014). *Ethical, legal, and professional issues in counseling*: Pearson Upper Saddle River, NJ.
- Sikes, A., Remley Jr, T. P., & Hays, D. G. (2010). Experiences of School Counselors during and after Making Suspected Child Abuse Reports. *Journal of School Counseling*, 8(21), n21.
- Sivis-Cetinkaya, R. (2015a). Ethical dilemmas of Turkish counsellors: a critical incidents study. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 43(4), 476-491. doi: 10.1080/03069885.2014.987726
- Sivis-Cetinkaya, R. (2015b). Turkish School Counselors' Experiences of Reporting Child Sexual Abuse: A Brief Report. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 24(8), 908-921. doi: 10.1080/10538712.2015.1084072
- Tillman, K. S., Prazak, M. D., Burrier, L., Miller, S., Benezra, M., & Lynch, L. (2015). Factors influencing school counselors' suspecting and reporting of childhood physical abuse: Investigating child, parent, school, and abuse characteristics. *Professional School Counseling*, 19(1), 1096-2409-1019.1091. 1103.
- Tugay, D. (2008). Öğretmenlerin çocuk istismarı ve ihmaline yönelik farkındalık düzeyleri. *Yayınlanmamış Marmara Üniversitesi Sağlık Bilimleri Enstitüsü Yüksek Lisans tezi*.
- Ullman, S. E. (2007). Relationship to perpetrator, disclosure, social reactions, and PTSD symptoms in child sexual abuse survivors. *Journal of child sexual abuse*, 16(1), 19-36.
- Walsh, K., Mathews, B., Rassafiani, M., Farrell, A., & Butler, D. (2012). Understanding teachers' reporting of child sexual abuse: Measurement methods matter. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 34(9), 1937-1946.
- Zollner, H., Fuchs, K. A., & Fegert, J. M. (2014). Prevention of sexual abuse: improved information is crucial. *Child and adolescent psychiatry and mental health*, 8(1), 5.

Appendix

Table 1: The answers of the male and female school counsellors about the level of knowledge about sexual abuse

Questions of Survey Form	Adequate %(n)		Inadequate %(n)		P value
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Do you know your duties if you suspect a student is being or has been sexually abused?	61,8 (21)	38,2 (13)	64,4 (38)	35,6 (21)	0,799
Do you know your legal responsibilities in case of sexual abuse incidents?	55,1 (27)	44,9 (22)	72,7 (32)	27,3 (12)	0,078
Do you know the definition of sexual abuse and what actions are involved in sexual abuse?	47,4 (9)	52,6 (10)	67,6 (50)	32,4 (24)	0,103

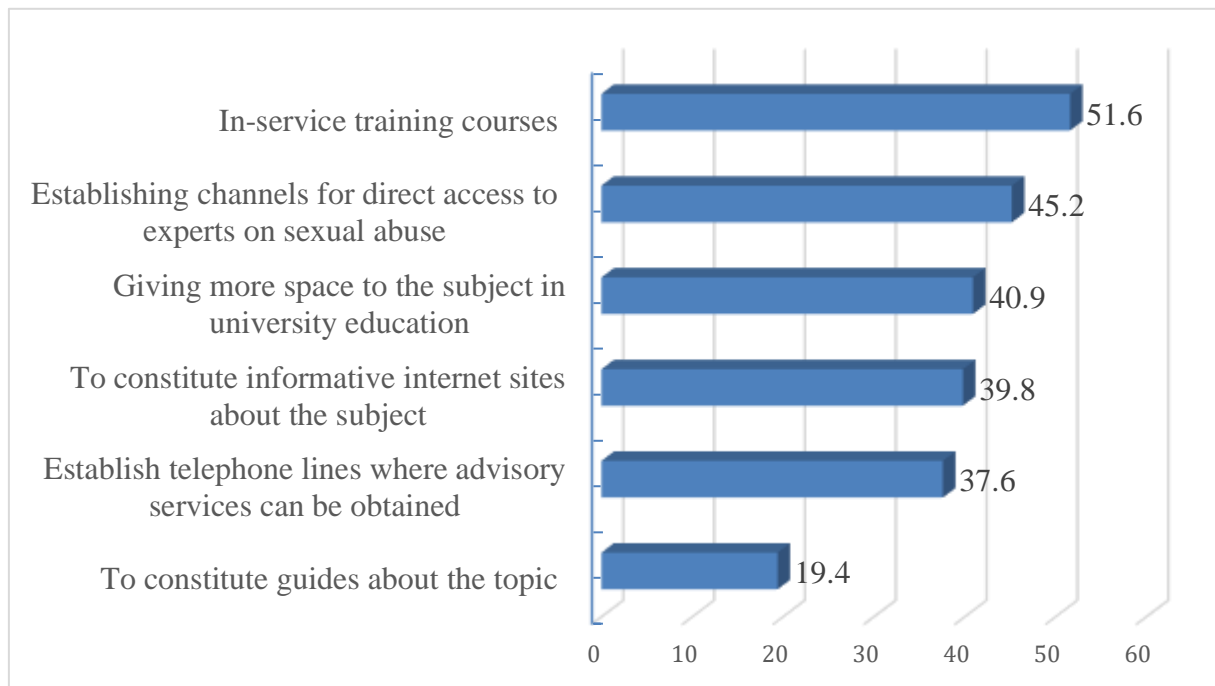


Figure 1. Recommendations of school counsellors to increase the level of knowledge about sexual abuse

Creative Commons licensing terms

Author(s) will retain the copyright of their published articles agreeing that a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0) terms will be applied to their work. Under the terms of this license, no permission is required from the author(s) or publisher for members of the community to copy, distribute, transmit or adapt the article content, providing a proper, prominent and unambiguous attribution to the authors in a manner that makes clear that the materials are being reused under permission of a Creative Commons License. Views, opinions and conclusions expressed in this research article are views, opinions and conclusions of the author(s). Open Access Publishing Group and European Journal of Education Studies shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage or liability caused in relation to/arising out of conflicts of interest, copyright violations and inappropriate or inaccurate use of any kind content related or integrated into the research work. All the published works are meeting the Open Access Publishing requirements and can be freely accessed, shared, modified, distributed and used in educational, commercial and non-commercial purposes under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).