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Abstract

Objective:

Little is known about Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) in Chinese societies. This study examined CSA experiences and associations with demographic factors, self-reported health and risky behaviors among senior high school students in four provinces in central and northern China.

Method:

Students in four schools in Hubei, Henan, Hebei, and Beijing provinces participated in an anonymous, self-completed questionnaire survey. From a total enrolment of 3,261 students in the target classes in years 11 and 12, 2,300 (70.5%) returned valid questionnaires. Mean age was 17.2 years. The questionnaire was adapted from prior CSA research in Australia and utilized standard scales for depression, self-esteem, and youth risk behavior.

Results:

Prevalence of any unwanted sexual experience before the age of 16 years was higher among females (16.7%) than males (10.5%). Sexual penetration was rarely reported (1%), while 7% reported at least one type of physical contact abuse (female 8.9%, male 5.0%). Risk of any CSA was not associated with the existence of siblings (one-child vs. two- or more child families), rural/urban residence during childhood, or parental education. Males and females with CSA were more depressed and suicidal, and drank alcohol more often, than unaffected adolescents. Contact CSA was strongly associated with sexual intercourse (ever) for both males and females. Females with CSA were more likely than others to engage in anorexic and bulimic behaviors, while males with CSA were often involved in violence.

Conclusion:

Social norms for consensual sexual experiences differ between Eastern and Western societies. CSA experiences also differ, with substantially less penetrative and physical...
contact abuse in China. However, the psychological and behavioral profile of abused, young Chinese people, including the additional burden associated with contact abuse, is similar to that found in other cultures.

**Keywords:** Child sexual abuse; Adolescents; Risk behaviors; Mental health; China

**References**


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