

## Influencing Factors of Intention to Report Child Abuse of Nursing College Students in Korea

Kyung-Mi Cho<sup>1</sup>, Eun-Joo, Kim<sup>2</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> Dept. Of Nursing, Kyungin College, Gyesan-dong 548-4,  
Incheon, Korea

<sup>2</sup> Dept. Of Nursing science, Sangji University, Sangjidae-gil 83,  
Gangwon-do, Korea

**Abstract.** This study was designed to explore the awareness of child abuse and the intention to report among nursing college students. Attitude against child abuse, that is to child rearing beliefs, attitude towards child punishment, attitude of abusing parents against punishment, professional attitudes were stricter than established mandated reporter such as health care providers, nurses, teachers in Korea. In order to explain final analytical results, attitude towards punishing parents against punishment and professional responsibilities as well as perceived behavioral control have contributed 12.1% ( $R^2=.121$ ,  $p=.000$ ).

**Keywords:** Child abuse, Intention, Awareness, Nursing students

### 1 Introduction

Child abuse is a serious problem that threatens children's and adolescents' health and wellbeing. In order to solve this problem, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) emphasizes the necessity of children's rights to receive special protection and help for all children, including victims of child abuse.

Nurses can work with children and evaluate for the possibility of child abuse and report their suspicions as indicated. Nurses are in an important position for early intervention and arbitration to assist the abused child [1]. For the preventive aspect, their early intervention can provide support and educational prevention materials to the parents of children who are exposed to the potential risk as well as pregnant women who have the risk of child abuse. In fact, the characteristics of abusers based on an analysis performed in 2010 identified that 31.3% lacked attitude and method of childcare, 23.7% experienced socio-economical stress or isolation, and 14.1% had addiction or disease. This also indicates that parents' childcare education and social support are important.

Most of the medical practitioners who neglected their obligation to report child abuse tended to have incorrect understanding of the severity of abuse, did not know the reporting process and where to make the report, or were not willing to intervene in family issues without accurate understanding of their obligations as mandatory reporters. The purpose of this study is to evaluate nursing students' awareness, knowledge, attitude, and intention as related to reporting child abuse. Additionally the

study will identify the factors that affect nursing students' intention to make child abuse reports. This analysis will be helpful in establish the necessary components of effective child abuse course for the nursing students. Further, the nursing students will better understand the practitioner's role including the obligation to report child abuse.

### 1.1 Objectives

- 1) To identify nursing college students' intention to report child abuse. : knowledge to report, attitude to report, intention to report.
- 2) To identify the influencing factors of the nursing college students' intention to report child abuse.

## 2 Methods

This study was performed on 202 freshman and sophomore students who are majoring in nursing in two universities located in the metropolitan area in Korea. Total of 202 was recruited for the study that would be enough to represent the results of regression analysis. Among them, 96 were freshmen and 106 were sophomores. The subjects included 7 (3.5%) male students and 195 (96.5%) female students. The CARIS (Child Abuse Report Intension Scale) consist of six sections: demographic information, past experiences of reporting child abuse, and four scales measuring the major study variables: (1) knowledge, (2) attitude, (3) perceived behavioral control, and (4) intended reporting behaviors(eight vignettes) [2]. The Cronbach's of scale was .614. This study analyzed the subject's characteristics, knowledge, attitude, perceived behavioral control, and intention to report child abuse using SPSS WIN 17.0.

## 3 Results

### 3.1 Nursing students' Knowledge, Attitude and Intention in Relation to Report Child Abuse

In result of understanding the knowledge, attitude, and intention in relation to report child abuse through specific cases of child abuse with different level of severity (Table 3), the mean of the attitude toward reporting critical cases of child abuse was  $45.7 \pm 15.5$  points and the mean of the attitude toward reporting minor cases of child abuse was  $41.9 \pm 13.2$  points. The mean of the knowledge of reporting critical cases of child abuse was  $60.6 \pm 11.3$  points and the mean of the knowledge of reporting minor cases of child abuse was  $58.4 \pm 9.9$  points. The mean of the intention to report critical cases of child abuse was  $27.5 \pm 6.2$  points and the mean of the intention to report minor cases of child abuse was  $27.1 \pm 5.8$  points. There were statistically

significant difference between the means of the attitude, knowledge, and intention in relation to reporting critical and minor cases of child abuse.

### 3.2 Correlation between the Intention to Report Child Abuse and the Variables

In result of verifying the correlation coefficients between variables, knowledge in relation to report child abuse showed significantly positive correlations with attitude regarding punishment and culpability of offenders or victims, attitude regarding professional responsibilities, perceived behavioral control and knowledge to child abuse while it does not showed correlation with attitude regarding childrearing belief and discipline. Intention to report showed significantly positive correlations with attitude regarding punishment and culpability of offenders or victims, attitude regarding professional responsibilities, perceived behavioral control.

### 3.3 Predictive Factors of the Intention to Report Child Abuse

In order to understand the predictive factors of the intention to report child abuse, stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed. In result of the analysis, the attitude toward punishment of parents, the attitude toward professional responsibilities, and perceived behavioral control were the factors that influence the intention to report. The attitude toward professional responsibilities and the attitude toward punishment of parents, in particular, showed a high F value. The attitude toward punishment of parents, the attitude toward professional responsibilities, and perceived behavioral control described the intention to make the report by 12.1 % ( $R^2=.121$ ,  $p<.001$ ).

**Table 1.** Factors Influence on the Intention for Child abuse reporting (N=202)

	b	$\beta$	Adjusted $R^2$	t	F	p
Attitude(PC) <sup>†</sup>	.168	.078	.001	1.037		
Attitude(PR) <sup>‡</sup>	.647	.293	.106	3.262		
Perceived behavior control	.318	.108	.113	-1.206	5.695	<.001
Knowledge (child abuse) <sup>§</sup>	-.402	-.091	.121	1.231		

<sup>†</sup>Attitude(PC):Attitude regarding punishment and culpability of offenders or victims

<sup>‡</sup>Attitude(PR):Attitude regarding professional responsibility

<sup>§</sup> Knowledge(child abuse) :Knowledge of child abuse and reporting law

## 4 Discussion

The nursing students' attitude, knowledge, and intention varied according to their understanding of severity of child abuse. Considering this, the decision to make a report may vary from person to person if each person cognizes the severity of child abuse differently. In this study, the attitude toward punishment of parents, the attitude toward professional responsibilities, and perceived behavioral control were identified as the influential variables and the factors affecting the nursing students' intention to report child abuse. In the study of Kim & Park [3], the attitude toward professional responsibilities in child abuse was the only significant variable, while in the study of Feng [2], perceived behavioral control and the attitude toward professional responsibilities were the significant variables. Based on these findings, it was found that the knowledge of reporting or the limited tolerance of child abuse does not affect the act of reporting. The intention to make a report was stronger when the subjects agreed to legal measures and limiting parental rights in relation to the attitude toward violent parents. Therefore, even if one is aware that he/she is a mandatory reporter and witnesses of child abuse, his/her personal attitude toward child abuse affects whether he/she would actually make the report. It was found that the most popular reason why mandatory reporters would not report suspected child abuse offenses is because they believe child abuse is 'family issues' and 'a part of child rear' [4]. In order to overcome these limitations caused by differences in definition, it would be necessary to define child abuse clearly.

## 5 Conclusion

Child abuse training programs for the nursing students should be examined to develop a specialized and applicable training program. The program should include credible guidelines for the nursing students to respond to suspected child abuse offenses as professionals. There should also be protocols to objectively evaluate parents' abusive behaviors.

## References

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