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## **Child maltreatment in Vietnam : prevalence, risk factors, and consequences**

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## APPENDICES

### SUMMARY IN ENGLISH

Child maltreatment affects many life aspects of victims from childhood to adulthood, as well as their families and society. Although it is prevalent in many cultures and societies, scientific evidence about child maltreatment in resource-poor contexts like Vietnam is scarce compared to the number of studies on child maltreatment in developed countries. Therefore, we conducted a prevalence study on child maltreatment in Vietnam (Vietnam Prevalence study on maltreatment of children and youth; VPM-2014) to shed more light on the magnitude of this burden in Vietnam. We investigated the prevalence of child maltreatment in a cross-cultural perspective, the changes in prevalence estimates in Vietnam over time, child and family characteristics related to child maltreatment, and possible consequences of child maltreatment for Vietnamese children.

To gain this knowledge, we administered several questionnaires and a working memory test during class hours to secondary and high school students in four Northern provinces of Vietnam. The final sample consisted of 1,851 students who were 12-17 years old. Hanoi, the capital city, was purposely selected and the other three provinces were randomly selected. In each province, two secondary schools were randomly selected, and the two high schools nearby the secondary schools were also selected. We compared the data from this study with the data from the prevalence study on child maltreatment in the Netherlands (NPM-2010) to achieve a cross-cultural comparison and we compared it with the data from the prevalence study in Vietnam 10 years ago to estimate the changes in prevalence over time.

Regarding the prevalence of child maltreatment in Vietnam, half of the students reported at least one event of child maltreatment in the past year and the majority had experienced at least one type of child maltreatment during their lives. Emotional abuse was most frequently reported (31.8%), followed by physical abuse (19.1%), neglect (25.0%), and witnessing parental conflict (15.3%). Sexual abuse was the least prevalent type (2.6%). Compared with the Netherlands, the prevalence estimates of most types of child maltreatment were higher in Vietnam. The largest difference was with emotional abuse, followed by neglect, physical abuse, and witnessing parental conflict. Only the past year sexual abuse prevalence in Vietnam was lower.

The exploration of child maltreatment trends over 10 years showed that the prevalence estimates of sexual abuse and neglect were unchanged, while the prevalence of physical abuse and emotional abuse declined over time. The prevalence of physical abuse of younger adolescents and boys decreased more than that of older

adolescents and girls, respectively. For sexual abuse, older adolescents reported an increase in the prevalence of sexual abuse.

The investigation of risk factors for child maltreatment indicated that several child and family characteristics are related to child maltreatment. The likelihood of emotional abuse, witnessing parental conflict, and experiencing multiple types of child maltreatment during lifetime increased with child age. Boys had a higher risk than girls on lifetime sexual abuse, and past year and lifetime physical abuse. Living in a single parent family was linked to most types of child maltreatment including lifetime sexual abuse, neglect, and multiple types of child maltreatment, and both past year and lifetime witnessing parental conflict. Noticeably, we found an association between high socioeconomic status (SES) and past year emotional abuse, and between parental employment and lifetime emotional abuse. "Tiger parenting" might explain these associations. Tiger parenting is a parenting style consisting of harsh emotional discipline to force children's academic achievement. It may be more common in families with a high SES and with high employment status who value educational achievement of their children.

Regarding the consequences of child maltreatment in Vietnamese children, all types of child maltreatment were linked to emotional dysfunctioning. Lifetime and past year experiences of physical abuse and lifetime experiences of sexual abuse and neglect were related to poorer perceived physical health. None of the maltreatment types were related to overweight or underweight status. Regarding cognitive functioning, lifetime experience of sexual abuse and neglect were related to poorer working memory. Unexpectedly, emotional abuse was linked to better academic performance, which once again suggests the existence of the "tiger parenting" practice in Vietnam. Lifetime experience of sexual abuse and neglect were related to the largest number of poor functioning in child wellbeing aspects. The relations described above were similar for boys and girls, and ethnic minority and majority groups.

In sum, although there were positive signals on the changes of emotional and physical abuse, all types of child maltreatment were still highly prevalent and most were more common in Vietnam than in the Netherlands. Even in a culture where harsh discipline is accepted and normative like Vietnam, child maltreatment was related to negative child well-being aspects with the largest effect on emotional functioning. Single parenthood was a prominent characteristic related to child maltreatment besides child gender and age. Our study draws a clearer picture on child maltreatment in Vietnam. It highlights the importance of prompt responses to child maltreatment based on scientific evidence in the country and illuminates some topics for further research such as Tiger parenting and neglect, an understudied type of child maltreatment with a large range of consequences.