

Review of child maltreatment prevention programs in South Korea

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Abstract- Objective: The objective of this study is twofold. The first objective is to examine the status of studies on the effect of child maltreatment prevention programs in South Korea. The second objective is to recommend directions for child maltreatment prevention programs based on the results of the first objective.

Procedure: A literature search of prevention programs for child maltreatment was conducted. Research studies published from 1989 to 2013 were identified through a computerized selection process, resulting in 198 studies. Further detailed search of keywords ultimately identified 37 studies focusing on child maltreatment prevention programs. These 37 studies were further classified and reviewed. **Results:** This study was able to find several pertinent findings. First, child maltreatment prevention programs targeting teachers and parents were not sufficient. Second, child maltreatment prevention programs for high risk population were also insufficient in the selected literatures. Third, based on the existing studies, child maltreatment prevention programs in South Korea lacked diversified contents. Fourth, most research measured effectiveness through attitude and awareness factors. Finally, child maltreatment programs were not systematic and mainly were conducted as one-time programs.

Conclusions: There needs to be more studies examining the effectiveness of prevention programs for child maltreatment, notably, sustainable and long-term effects of prevention programs. Moreover, these programs need to include high-risk populations, with more diverse contents, that are systematically included throughout all three levels of prevention – primary, secondary, and tertiary.

Keywords- *maltreatment, abuse, prevention, literature review*

I. INTRODUCTION

Numerous researches already demonstrated the seriousness of the results of child maltreatment. Maltreated children have experienced negative consequences on cognitive, emotional, and social function [1]. Child maltreatment has individual and social impact. The negative effects last throughout a child's life in the form of failure in school, social maladjustment, and emotional problems such as depression and aggression [2]. Child maltreatment causes negative consequences on social

aspects as well. The child who experienced maltreatment has a high probability to commit crime or cause indirect damage to other people [3]. In addition, child maltreatment increases probability to exclude students from education which in turn reduces productive roles in the society. Finally, it creates a vicious cycle of poverty leading to transfer poverty to the next generation [4]. Prevention of child maltreatment not only helps save lives of children but reduces social problems [3] and social costs as well [5]. Child maltreatment should be clearly defined in prevention and intervention, and social welfare services change according to the definition [6]. In Child Welfare Law of South Korea, child maltreatment is defined as 'physical, emotional and sexual violence or harassment which can harm the child's welfare and hinder normal development, including omission and neglect by caregivers and other adults [7]. This definition includes intentional violence and unintentional act such as neglect.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (hereafter referred to as CRC) General Comment 13 defines child maltreatment within a broader view of 'violence'. Violence represents all forms of harm to children; physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse [8]. However, the recognition that the children are possessions of adults and must obey the instructions of adults has encouraged social atmosphere allowing adults to use corporal punishment to educate and discipline them. Accordingly, it infringes on the inherent rights of the child. In this study, child maltreatment is defined as 'the action or environment that impede a child's development including violation of rights of the child', following the definition of CRC.

Child maltreatment is in the increasing trend. According to the National Child Abuse Report, 6,403 cases were judged as child maltreatment in 2011 compared to 2,015 cases in 2001. When reported child maltreatment cases are divided according to types, neglect comprised of 26.8%, emotional abuse comprised of 14.6%, physical abuse comprised of 7.2%, and sexual abuse comprised of 4.3% of the total cases. Overlapping maltreatment occurred much more frequently (47.1%) than other singular types of maltreatment [9]. The number of child maltreatment cases seems to increase if the report includes cases that are judged as 'no conviction' and 'incongruous'. Increasing incidence of child maltreatment and the high portion of overlapping maltreatment suggest the

necessity of prevention that covers all sub-types of maltreatment broadly.

Child maltreatment has frequently occurred by people who have obligation to protect children. Looking at child maltreatment cases by perpetrators, in most cases, parents constituted a large portion of perpetrators (83.9%). Teachers, school instructors, facilitators and personnel were included as offenders (7.9%). This evidence strongly points to the necessity of child maltreatment prevention programs for adults who have the obligation to protect children.

Child maltreatment prevention program mean structured programs designed to minimize the impact of maltreatment and to prevent it[10]. Fontes(1995)[11] suggested child maltreatment prevention through three levels. Primary prevention targets the general public and it is interested in social causes such as violence of mass media, poverty, and unemployment. Therefore, child maltreatment aims to raise awareness by mass media, parent education, preschool and elementary school programs. Secondary prevention is conducted for high-risk people. It includes programs such as parent education programs targeting single mothers and child maltreatment prevention programs at community centers in economically disadvantaged areas. Tertiary prevention is the phase used with 'treatment' and it involves parenting skills training, anger management program or communication skills training for children to prevent re-occurrence of maltreatment [11].

As the voice for the protection of child rights increases, international effort for prevention of child maltreatment has gradually increased. Since South Korea ratified the CRC in 1991, efforts to protect and promote child rights also increased. In this regard, the Child Welfare Law was amended and the Central Child Protection(CCP) Center was established. Recently, as the importance of child maltreatment prevention is emphasized, child maltreatment prevention programs are conducted by the CCP centers, community centers, and other child protection centers such as 'Good neighbors' and 'Save the Children'.

Most of the current research on child maltreatment prevention programs focus on sexual abuse prevention[12], [13], [14], [15], [16], [17]. However, prevention programs are necessary to prevent different types of maltreatment including overlapping maltreatment.

When child maltreatment is viewed as 'the action or environment that impedes a child's development including violation of rights of the child', child-right-based programs are necessary. However, researches that evaluate the contents and outcome of the programs are insufficient [18], [19], [20]. Therefore, the purpose of this study is twofold. Firstly, examination of the status of studies of the effect of child maltreatment prevention programs in South Korea. Secondly, recommendations for future child maltreatment prevention programs appropriate for the Korean context, based on the results of the first purpose.

II. PROCEDURE

This study attempts to review the literature on child maltreatment prevention programs published in academic journals and dissertations. Collection of research was done through computerized data bases such as Korean Digital Library (<http://www.dlibrary.go.kr/>), Research Information Sharing Service, (RISS, <http://www.riss.kr/>), and National Discovery for Leaders(NDSL, <http://www.ndsl.kr/>). As the initial study on child maltreatment prevention program was published in 1989, this study reviewed research from 1989 to 2013.

Literature search followed the following steps. The initial search used 'child maltreatment', 'child maltreatment prevention', 'child abuse', 'child abuse prevention', 'maltreatment prevention', 'abuse prevention' as keywords. Through which, 198 Korean literatures were collected. In the second step, the title and subjects were reviewed that met the purpose of this study. 116 studies were excluded as they focused on spouse violence, elderly people abuse, counselor related variables, resulting in 82 studies. In the final step, 37 studies were identified through review of abstracts to collect studies focusing on child maltreatment prevention programs.

Through the literature review process, we constructed an analyzing framework consisting of the purpose of studies, participants, aims, and analyzed variables of programs. Henceforth, the 37 studies that were finally selected were further analyzed based on this framework.

III. RESULTS

First, selected studies of child maltreatment prevention program were classified according to the purpose of studies as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Classification according to the purpose of the study

		Number of studies(%)
The purpose of study	Incidence of prevention programs	7(22.6%)
	Theoretical study on the direction for program improvement	9(24.3%)
	Examination of program effectiveness	21(56.8%)

Studies about child maltreatment prevention programs, commonly discussed the necessity for child maltreatment prevention programs [3], [21], [22]. Prevention programs were not systematic and mainly conducted as one-time programs. Furthermore data and training of teachers were not sufficient. Therefore, government needs to make more efforts to establish systematic child maltreatment prevention programs [3], [4], [21], [22], [23], [24].

Studies about the direction of improving child maltreatment prevention programs showed high demands for parent education programs [25], [26], [27] [28], [16], [29]. Cheon(1989)[25] emphasized the necessity of training programs for adults prior to marriage as well as after having children. Kong(1999)[30] recommended the necessity of home visiting programs. Cho & Lee(2012)[31] discussed that parent education programs are necessary to prevent maltreatment of children with disability and that they need to be differentiated according to the presence or absence of maltreatment.

Table 2 shows the result of classification according to the aim of program, participants of program and result analysis of 21 studies. These 21 studies had conducted child maltreatment prevention program and analyzed effectiveness of the program. The studies are further classified as main theme and sub theme.

Studies that conducted child maltreatment prevention programs and examined the effectiveness are categorized into primary prevention studies and secondary prevention studies. The rate of primary prevention studies for the general population is much higher than secondary prevention programs for at-risk population(at-risk population 33%, general population 67%). At-risk population included adolescents with disabilities[13], [15], parents of children with disabilities[32], mothers with children from the family of children with disabilities[33], and mother-and-child families with low-income[34], [35].

General population is categorized into children, parents, and teachers. Children are divided into infants [21], [36], [37], [38], elementary students[5], [16], [17], [39], [40], and adolescents[16], [39], [40], [41], [42], youth[41], [42] according to ages. The rate of prevention programs for adolescents is much less than for infants and elementary students(infant, elementary school students 24% each, adolescents 10%). The studies that conducted child maltreatment prevention program mainly for teachers or parents and analyzed program effectiveness were not found. Lee, Jang and Yoo(2001)[18] and Han(2003)[19] conducted prevention programs with various participants including children, parents and teachers. These two studies are noteworthy to mention because they included teachers and parents as part of children's ecosystem.

Child maltreatment prevention program studies are categorized into sexual maltreatment prevention, psychological maltreatment prevention, neglect prevention, and overall maltreatment prevention according to the aim of programs. Sexual maltreatment prevention studies totaled 13 in number[13], [15], [16], [17], [21], [36], [37], [38], [39], [40], [42], [43], and comprised of the highest rate among entire programs(65%). Suh(2001)[33] conducted a psychological maltreatment prevention program and Park and Shin(2001)[34] conducted a neglect prevention program. Programs to reduce physical maltreatment were not conducted. Overall maltreatment prevention programs were conducted in 6 studies without distinguishing sub-types of maltreatment [5], [18], [19], [32], [35], [44].

Sexual maltreatment prevention program studies examined the changes in attitudes and awareness of sexual maltreatment, and sexual attitude and knowledge of sex and reproductive

health[15], [17], [21], [38], [40], [41], [43]. Sexual maltreatment prevention programs have differences in the program contents depending on the participants. Studies for adolescents included contents about healthy relationship with the opposite gender and the consequential responsibility and limits[13], [15], [42]. Studies for infants included education about importance of their own body[21], [38], [42]. Most prevention programs conducted in the studies were educational programs in order to teach knowledge and coping skills (17 studies). 4 studies conducted prevention programs using psychotherapy such as art psychotherapy, cognitive behavioral therapy and attachment therapy [33], [34], [44], [45]. Overall prevention programs contained comprehension of the types and definitions of child maltreatment and coping strategies of child maltreatment [5], [19]. Studies including parents as participants used education programs about child development and parenting skills [19], [32].

Quantitative analysis was used to examine the effectiveness of programs in most studies, and two studies used qualitative analysis. Measured variables were largely categorized into awareness and attitude factors(73%) and other factors(18%) including risk and protective factors in studies using quantitative analysis. Awareness and attitude factors included awareness of child rights, child maltreatment, and awareness of coping strategies for child maltreatment[5], [18], knowledge of sexual maltreatment[16], [17], [36], [38], [39], [43], knowledge of sex[16], [17], [21], [42], prevention attitude of sexual maltreatment[21], [41], prevention behavior of sexual maltreatment[21], awareness of coping strategies for sexual maltreatment[15], [36], [37], [39], [43] and perception of sexual maltreatment[40], [43]. Other factors included were parenting attitudes[32], [33], family relationship[34], depression of mothers, parenting stress, parenting environment of the family[19] and child maltreatment potential for[32], [35]. Han(2003)[19] measured awareness and attitudes as well as other factors. Qualitative studies included a case study [45] and a study using pre- and post- assessment of picture test and content analysis after group integrative arts therapy [44].

Table 2. Classification according to main themes and sub themes

Main themes	Sub themes	Number of studies(%)		
Participants of program ¹	Disabled adolescents	2(9.5%)	7(33.3%)	
	Parents of disabled child	1(4.8%)		
	mothers with children from the family of children with disabilities	1(4.8%)		
	Mothers of single mother families with low-income	2(9.5%)		
	Perpetrator parents	1(4.8%)		
	General population	Infants	5(23.8%)	14(66.7%)
		Elementary school students	5(23.8%)	
		Adolescents	2(9.5%)	
		Various participants (children, parents, teachers)	2(9.5%)	
Aim of the program	Sexual maltreatment prevention	13(61.9%)	20(57%)	
	Psychological maltreatment prevention	1(4.8%)		
	Neglect prevention	1(4.8%)		
	Overall maltreatment prevention	6(28.6%)		
Analyzed variables of programs (Possible for overlap)	Awareness of child rights	2(6.1%)	24(72.7%)	
	Awareness of child maltreatment	2(6.1%)		
	Awareness of prevention centers	5(15.2%)		
	Knowledge of sexual maltreatment	1(3.0%)		
	Knowledge of sex	4(12.12%)		
	Prevention attitude of sexual maltreatment	2(6.1%)		
	Prevention behavior of sexual maltreatment	1(3.0%)		
	Awareness of coping skills of sexual maltreatment	5(15.2%)		
	Perception of sexual maltreatment	2(6.1%)		
	Other factors	Changes in parenting attitudes		2(6.1%)
Self-esteem, family relationship		1(3.0%)		
Depression of mothers, parenting stress, parenting environment of family, infant's temperament		1(3.0%)		
Child maltreatment potential		2(6.1%)		
Awareness, attitudes and related factors		Awareness of child rights, child maltreatment, coping strategies with child maltreatment, and prevention centers, parenting attitude and stress, Awareness of teacher as mandated reporters	1(3.0%)	
	Qualitative research(or analysis)	2(6.1%)		

¹ Possible for overlap: Studies that have more than one participant group can be included in more than one category.

IV. DISCUSSION

Through literature review of studies concerning child maltreatment programs, this study was able to find several pertinent findings that warrant attention. First, this study found that programs for teachers and parents are not sufficient. Programs that enhance children's ability to protect and cope with maltreatment by themselves are necessary. However, integrated programs that include parents and teachers are even more required as they are part of ecosystem of children. Not only developing more programs for parents who have own children, but parent education for prospective parents is also necessary. Prospective parents education programs developed by Lee & Lee(1998)[12] and Jung(2002)[10] are examples of effective programs that reduce stress experienced through marriage and construction of a new family, building a sense of responsibility as a member of the family and the society that can be applied to child maltreatment prevention. Second, child maltreatment prevention must be conducted throughout all three levels: Primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. However, literature search conducted in this study found that the rate of primary prevention programs was higher than that of secondary prevention programs. Primary prevention programs have an advantage of possibility for targeting broader participants[11]. Furthermore, at-risk population must be targeted although it is more difficult to identify this population for inclusion in prevention programs. Taking into account of limited resources of communities, prevention programs for at-risk population who are more vulnerable to child maltreatment can be more efficient. In future studies, development and examination of secondary prevention programs considering characteristics of each population are required, which includes diverse at-risk populations such as disabled children and their parents, single mother families, grandparent-and-grandchild families, divorced families, families with disabled parents. Third, this study confirmed the need for diversified contents of prevention programs. Most studies focused on sexual maltreatment prevention programs. The attention on prevention programs for psychological maltreatment or neglect is insufficient. This result reflects that the consequences of sexual maltreatment are more severe and that sexual maltreatment leads to greater social attention. However, the contents of prevention programs need to be diversified to reflect the characteristics of sub types of maltreatment as sexual, psychological and physical maltreatment and neglect have different definitions and characteristics.

Fourth, it is necessary to design researches that are able to measure various variables to examine the effects of child maltreatment prevention programs. The effect of a child maltreatment prevention program can be measured through diverse variables of eco-systemic factors such as changes in parental attitudes, improvement of family relationship, the improvement of parenting environment, change of teaching attitudes of teachers, and respectful attitudes for child rights. However, due to the difficulty of measurement, the effect of child maltreatment prevention programs tends to be concentrated mainly on attitude and awareness factors. Researchers need to explore other variables that explain reduced risk factors or increased protective factors as the

effect of prevention programs. In addition, in order to verify the effectiveness maltreatment prevention program, there needs to be more studies examining the effectiveness of prevention programs for child maltreatment, notably, sustainable and long-term effects of prevention programs.

Fifth, this study affirmed that child maltreatment programs in South Korea are not systematic and are mainly conducted as one-time program. Children's ecosystem is extended according to age from family to kindergarten, and to school and to the community. Systematic prevention programs are required and they should regard the changes in age and the various ecosystems of children. This study found that sexual maltreatment prevention programs reflected changes in program contents according to child development from infancy to adolescence. However, prevention programs for other sub types of maltreatment reflecting changes in contents were not founded. Constructing developmentally appropriate prevention programs need to be conducted and systematically applied and included in all levels of prevention programs, not just as one-time event. Korean government needs to devote more attention and to make more efforts for child maltreatment prevention programs in order to develop guidelines for prevention programs and to examine their effectiveness over the long term. Finally, this study offered an analysis framework examining the purpose, participants, aims of programs, and effect variables of studies.

This study has a few limitations. First, the study could not analyze a large number of researches about child maltreatment prevention programs as there was a lack of studies that examined the effectiveness of programs in Korea. Additionally, the subjects of this study were limited to researches available for online search. Therefore, in the future research, analyzing various resources such as unpublished researches is suggested. Second, this study analyzed basic information and contents of the characteristics of maltreatment prevention programs. Therefore, future study needs to conduct in-depth analysis about all aspects of the programs. In spite of these limitations, this study has significance in that it was able to identify recent trend in maltreatment prevention programs and to provide direction for future programs.

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