Perception of child maltreatment and neglect: An exploratory study on Pakistani adolescents and their parents

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The parent-child relationship is highly significant to a child's psychological and emotional development. Rejection from the parents can have certain repercussions bordering on maltreatment and neglect of a child’s needs, with the child at the center of suffering and the parents being unaware of it. The study aimed at assessing adolescents’ experience of maltreatment and neglect with respect to perceptions of parental behaviors in terms of acceptance-rejection of both parents and children. A sample consisting of 186 family units, comprising of adolescents (aged 13-18 years) and their parents, residing in Islamabad and Rawalpindi was approached using convenient sampling strategy. Survey method was utilized to collect data using parental acceptance-rejection questionnaire and child abuse and trauma scale. Results from inferential analysis suggested that the parental acceptance-rejection was positively associated with both adolescents' perception of parental acceptance-rejection as well as experience of maltreatment and neglect. Moreover, the experience of maltreatment and neglect was also found to have a positive correlation with adolescents’ perception. T-test analysis suggested a difference in parent and adolescent perceptions, with adolescents reporting lesser acceptance from the parents as compared to parental report. Parent-child perceptions showed a degree of discrepancy indicating that parents, to a certain extent, are unaware of the fact that their treatment towards their children is causing pain to them, which leads to their feelings of rejection and contribute to the emotional maltreatment and neglect. Therefore, it is important to educate parents about the psychological/emotional needs of their children which would subsequently have a positive impact on their wellbeing.

Biography

Iram Gul has 15 years of teaching experience in Department of Behavioral Sciences, Fatima Jinnah Women University. She has completed her PhD from School of Health Studies, University of Bradford, UK on psychosocial predictors of quality of life in MI patients. Her areas of interest are chronic diseases, child mental health and quality of life. She has successfully carried out research projects on psychological assessment of security personnel, development and validation of social support scale, psychological assessment of children and standardization and validation of postnatal depression screening scale and promoting tolerance and wellbeing through education.

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