



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Addressing Child Abuse and Neglect: Advocating for Forensic Training Among Dentists in Pakistan for Enhanced Detection and Reporting Mechanisms

Raahim Salman Abdul Ghaffar¹, Dawood Pathan², Abdurrehman Malik¹, Maida Khalid²
¹Aga Khan University, ²Altamash Institute of Dental Medicine

How to cite: Ghaffar RS, Pathan D, Malik A, Khalid M. Addressing Child Abuse and Neglect: Advocating for Forensic Training Among Dentists in Pakistan for Enhanced Detection and Reporting Mechanisms. Int J Forensic Odontology.2024.9;1;33-34.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56501/intjforensicodontol.v9i1.1049>

Received on: 13-05-2024

Accepted on: 24-05-2024

Web Published on:15-06-2024

Child abuse and neglect (CAN) has become so common in Pakistan that the societies become insensitive towards it. According to the NGO in Pakistan, Sahil reported that from the age of 6 to 15, boys are most vulnerable to abuse and the age bracket between 0 to 5 and 16 to 18 girls are at higher risk of abuse (1). Almost 60-75% of CAN involve facial injuries and marks which include bruising, ear injuries, eye injuries, fracture of the facial bone, and sexually transmitted infections. These signs can be immediately detected by the dentist by examination and by the history of the presenting scars, which may contain irrelevancy and lack of connectivity by the caregiver or guardian. For this reason, it has been recommended for so long that Dentists should be involved in child protection agencies. (2)

Globally reporting of CAN cases remains the major issue due to the lack of functional agencies or the lack of knowledge about the reporting mechanism to the child-protecting bodies in the region. The CAN cases remain unreported by dentists because they are not trained professionally to identify and detect such cases. Moreover, the study also revealed that the dentist remained silent and did not take any action against it even when they detected the cases (3). In lower-middle-income countries like Pakistan where under-funded child protection agencies or cultural taboos and conservative beliefs make it more difficult to tackle the situation, the lack of professional forensic training for the dentist puts the abused child in a more vulnerable position. (4)

Keeping these reasons in the eye, more explorative and deep studies are required among the dentists in Pakistan regarding their Forensic knowledge of CAN case detection and handling each case as the responsible active child-protecting body. Furthermore, the understanding of the country's laws and reporting knowledge should also be evaluated among dentists so that these studies would be the strong base for the policy reconsideration in the dental school, regarding forensic training among dentists in Pakistan

Address for Correspondence:

Dr. Raahim Salman Abdul Ghaffar
Aga Khan University
Email: salmanraahim4@gmail.com

References

- 1.Rahim S, Bourgaize C, Khan M, Matthew L, Barron I. Child sexual abuse in Pakistan schools: A non-systematic narrative literature review. *Journal of child sexual abuse*. 2021;30(5):546-62.
- 2.Singh V, Lehl G. Child abuse and the role of a dentist in its identification, prevention and protection: A literature review. *Dental Research Journal*. 2020;17(3):167-73.
- 3.Nogueira DA. Child abuse/neglect, the role of the dentist: a scoping review 2023.
- 4.Maul KM, Naeem R, Khan UR, Mian AI, Yousafzai AK, Brown N. Child abuse in Pakistan: A qualitative study of knowledge, attitudes and practice amongst health professionals. *Child abuse & neglect*. 2019;88: 51-7.



Published by MM Publishers
<https://www.mmpubl.com/ijfo>

This is an open access journal, and articles are distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License, which allows others to remix, tweak, and build upon the work non-commercially, as long as appropriate credits given and the new creations are licensed under the identical terms. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

Copyright ©2024 Raahim Salman Abdul Ghaffar, Dawood Pathan, Abdurrehman Malik, Maida Khalid