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Abstract

Background: Child maltreatment occurs across all cultures and societies. Research in Kuwait is necessary to document its prevalence and related factors.

Aims: To determine the prevalence of childhood abuse reported by first year students of Kuwait University in 2010 and its association with depression.

Methods: A random sample of first year undergraduates completed the Arabic version of the ISPCAN Child Abuse Screening Tools for young adults and were assessed for depression using the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9).

Results: Among 2508 respondents (70.9% female), 35.6%, 53.5% and 19.8% experienced at least one form of physical, emotional and sexual abuse, respectively. Physical abuse was more prevalent among boys (P < 0.001). For emotional and sexual abuse, sex differences were not statistically significant. Physical abuse was associated with living with the father, emotional abuse with living with the mother and sexual abuse with living with non-parents (P < 0.001).
Most perpetrators were non-parents. Abuse was more prevalent among students whose parents were separated/divorced, whose fathers were polygamous and where monthly family income was