

## Assessment of Nurses Beliefs Toward Reporting of Suspected (child abuse in Jordan)

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### الخلاصة

**الهدف:-** دراسة وصفية أجريت لتقييم اعتقادات الممرضين تجاه الإبلاغ عن الإساءة للأطفال المتوقعة في الأردن. ولتحقيق أهداف البحث تم استخدام استبيان خاص بالإساءة للأطفال.

**المنهجية:-** شملت عينه البحث ٢٢٤ ممرض اممرضة قانونيين معينتين في المستشفيات العامة مستشفيات الأطفال ،المركز الوطني للأمراض النفسية والعقلية، كليات التمريض ،مدارس التمريض . تم جمع العينة من ٢٤ نيسان ٢٠٠٤ ولغاية ٢٠ حزيران ٢٠٠٤ . كما تم تحليل البيانات من خلال تطبيق التحليل الإحصائي الوصفي والتكرار والوسط الحسابي والنسبة المئوية والتحليل الإحصائي الاستنتاجي و تحليل التباين.

**النتائج:-** أشارت نتائج البحث بوجود علاقة أيجابية ذات دلالة إحصائية عالية بين التعليم والتدريب والوقت الذي يقضى مع الأطفال كذلك وجود علاقة ذات دلالة إحصائية بين اعتقادات الممرضين وأسلوب الإبلاغ عن الإساءة المتوقعة للأطفال استنتجت الدراسة أن الممرضين لديهم معرفة قليلة عن عملية الإبلاغ عن الإساءة المتوقعة للأطفال.

**التوصيات:-** أوصت الدراسة بتحسين مهارات الممرضين تجاه الإبلاغ عن الإساءة للطفولة وضرورة تدريب وتعليم الممرضين حول الإساءة للأطفال وعملية الإبلاغ عنها.

### Abstract

**Objective:** To assess nurses' beliefs toward reporting suspected child abuse. To achieve the objectives of the study a questionnaire of child abuse was used.

**Methodology:-** The sample of the study consist of (224) registered nurses who were employed in general hospitals, pediatric hospitals, National psychiatry and mental illness center, nursing colleges, nursing schools.

Data were collected from 20 April 2004 to 20 June 2004. Data were analyzed through the application of descriptive statistical analysis. Percentage frequency and mean and inferential data analysis ANOVA.

**Results:** - The result of the study revealed that there was highly significant positive relationship between education and time spent with children, and significant relationship between nurses' beliefs and reporting behavior of suspected child abuse. It was concluded from the study that the nurses had poor knowledge of reporting procedure regard suspected child abuse.

**Recommendation:** - The study recommended improving nurses' skills in reporting of suspected child abuse as importance of nurse's education and training about child abuse and reporting procedure of suspected child abuse.

**Key words:** Child abuse, Nurses beliefs

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### Introduction

Child abuse and neglect has been identified as a major public health issue that has very serious consequences for the well-being of children in the community<sup>(1)</sup>.

Child abuse and neglect of children is not a new phenomenon in the history of human being; however, it is scientific study, particularly in behavioral psychology is relatively recent<sup>(2)</sup>.

Children who were subjected to all forms of abuse or neglect become regularly encountered. Subsequently, child maltreatment becomes recognized as a social problem in both developed and undeveloped parts of the world. Information gathered during the past decade has provided solid evidence that violence against children continues to increase<sup>(3)</sup>.

The topic of child abuse is relevant to all health professionals who have a unique role to play in recognizing children at risk and families needing assistance before maltreatment is established<sup>(3)</sup>.

Nurses in Jordan have limited knowledge on the concept of child abuse or skills to assess it<sup>(4)</sup>.

This may be because of the lack of recognition of child abuse as a health problem for which nurses and physicians have a role to play.<sup>(5)</sup>

Professionals who seriously under-report often mishandle suspected cases of maltreatment because they fail to recognize the signs of maltreatment.<sup>(6)</sup>

In Jordan, the local reporting rates of child abuse are low mainly because the topic remains taboo, denial is a common reaction even when cases are identified because of the secrecy surrounding the topic it may be that Jordanians. Because of the close relationships with their families and because of the extended family system. Traditionally have more secrets within family circles than do western families.<sup>(7)</sup>

The aims of the study are to examine the effect and the level of education in Jordanian nurses on reporting suspected child abuse, Examine the relationship between specific characteristics of Jordanian nurses. (Gender, age, years of practice, ECT. Electroconvulsive therapy.) And reporting of suspected child abuse.

## Methodology

A descriptive correlation (self-reporting) design was carried out from April 20 to June 28, 2004.

The questionnaire originally developed by Schweitzer R, et al (2003).

It was developed to gain a better understanding of beliefs about reporting suspected child abuse and neglected by medical staff.

Permission was obtained from the author of the study. The questionnaire was translated into Arabic language, and then translated back into English by bilingual experts.

To make the questionnaire more valid it was presented to experts in different fields. It was considered valid after looking to their suggestion and recommendation for modification.

For a purpose of measuring the reliability of the questionnaire a test and retest were carried out on 10 nurses in King Abdullah Hospital. The reliability coefficient was 0.88 and it was statistically significant.

The sample of the study consisted of (224) registered nurses who were recruited in public hospitals, specialized hospital, private hospital, and college of nursing.

Data was submitted to statistical analysis which includes the descriptive data analysis (frequencies and percentages) and the inferential data analysis one way analysis of variance (ANOVA).

## Results

**Table (1) Sample characteristics**

Characteristics of the sample	F	%
<u>Gender</u>		
Male	89	39.2
Female	135	60.8
<u>Age</u>		
15-25	51	23
26-35	127	57.2
36-45	40	18
46 >	6	1.8
<u>Education level</u>		
Diploma	90	40.6
B s n	114	50.9
Graduate degree	20	8.5
<u>Work sector</u>		
Government	127	79.5
private	97	20.5
<u>Work place</u>		
CHC	20	9
Nusabea college	13	5.8
Schools	20	9
King Abdullah hospital	43	27.2
Princess basma hospital	27	14.2
Princess rahma hospital	54	32.2
National psychiatry center	26	13.6
Jordan university of science & technology	21	11

<u>Marital status</u>		
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Single	64	28.6
Married	156	69.6
Divorced	2	0.9
Widow	2	0.9
<u>Years of work</u>		
1-5	90	40.2
6-10	68	30.3
11-15	33	14.8
16-20	18	8
>21	15	6.7
<u>Percentage of time spent(Hours weekly)</u>		
1-16	11	5.1
17-25	17	3.3
26-40	70	33
>41	126	58.6

This table shows that the majority of the nurses are female (60.8%) (57.2%) of them are of age group (26-35) years and (50.9%) of the sample with BSN degree graduate. (69.2%) of the studied group are married.

The table also shows that 40% of the sample their years of work are (1-5) years while 30% of them their years of work are (6-10) years.

About the time spent with the child the result shows that 58.6% of the sample has spent more than 41 hour weekly.

**Table (2) Nurses knowledge of reporting procedure of suspected child abuse.**

Items	Groups	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F=test	Sig.
1- do you have professional responsibility for notifying the authorities of a suspicion of child abuse	Between groups	1.687	2	.844	1.391	.251
	Within groups	133.371	220	.606		
	Total	135.058	222			
2- do you have statutory responsibility for notifying The authorities of a suspicion of child abuse.	Between groups	.114	2	.057	.113	.894
	Within groups	111.088	220	.505		
	Total	111.202	222			
3- If you suspect that a child is being abused, but you are unsure, is it appropriate to contact the authorities to discuss the matter?	Between groups	1.340	2	.670	.949	.389
	Within groups	154.629	219	.706		
	Total	155.968	221			
4- Do you know presence of laws and systems about child abuse?	Between groups	1.491	2	.746	1.561	.212
	Within groups	105.110	220	.478		
	Total	106.601	222			

5-do you have knowledge about which you report child abuse?	Between groups	.811	2	.405	.662	.517
	Within groups	134.624	220	.612		
	Total	135.435	222			
6- Do you have ethical responsibility for notifying the authorities of a suspicion of child abuse?	Between groups	.110	2	.055	.105	.900
	Within groups	115.468	220	.525		
	Total	115.578	222			

No significant differences were noted between nurses relative to reporting procedure. presentation was revealed using (ANOVA), were F- test showed no significance which uncovers a lot of irregularities to determine the reporting procedure and the high F-test score presented the item " have you know low and system about child abuse " & the low F-test score presented the item" do you have ethical responsibilities for notifying the authorities of suspicion of child abuse.

**Table (3)Nurses interested in who report of suspected child abuse**

Items	Groups	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F-test	Sig.
Which of these groups should be mandated to report suspected child abuse?						
1-Physicians	Between groups	.840	2	.420	.288	.750
	Within groups	322.620	221	1.460		
	Total	323.460	223			
2- nurses	Between groups	1.201	2	.601	.373	.689
	Within groups	354.243	220	1.610		
	Total	355.444	222			
3- family protection foundations	Between groups	.589	2	.295	.142	.868
	Within groups	457.868	220	2.081		
	Total	458.457	222			
4- National medical center	Between groups	2.616	2	1.308	.744	.476
	Within groups	386.505	220	1.757		
	Total	389.121	222			
5- other professionals	Between groups	.845	2	.423	.197	.821
	Within groups	468.655	219	2.140		
	Total	469.500	221			
6- teachers	Between groups	2.082	2	1.041	.484	.617
	Within groups	470.873	219	2.150		
	Total	472.955	221			
7- police officers	Between groups	1.836	2	.918	3.03	.050
	Within groups	63.212	206	.302		
	Total	64.048	208			

This table presents significant differences between nurses about the group those should be to report suspected child abuse, F-test (3.039) sig. (0.05). We determined that the respondent are significantly more likely at item" other professionals & the majority of respondents answer is (teacher) with percentage 81.2%.

**Table (4) Nursing education about child abuse and reporting behaviors.**

Items	Groups	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	f-test	P.value
Education and training 1- was child abuse addressed in your training	Between groups	.094	2	.047	.041	.960
	Within groups	253.784	219	1.159		
	Total	253.878	221			
2- Do you feel your education adequately addressed child abuse?	Between groups	2.549	2	1.274	2.276	.105
	Within groups	123.155	220	.560		
	Total	125.704	222			

The findings indicate that there are no significant differences between nurses about education on child abuse as measured by question 1, F (0.41) sig (0.960), And Question 2, F (2.276) sig (0.105).

**Table (5) Relation between No. of years of work and nurses reporting**

Items	Groups	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	f-test	Sig.
1-5 years	Between groups	.608	2	.304	3.087	.048
	Within groups	21,576	219	.099		
	Total	22.185	221			
6-10 years	Between groups	.018	2	.009	.054	.948
	Within groups	36.197	221	.164		
	Total	36.214	223			
11-15 years	Between groups	.036	2	.018	.211	.810
	Within groups	18.744	220	.085		
	Total	18.780	222			
16-20 years	Between groups	.237	2	.119	.651	.522
	Within groups	40.263	221	.182		
	Total	40.500	223			

This table shows that there is significant differences in the relationships between numbers of years of work and nurses reporting of suspected child abuse ,as measured by Q A.F 1-5 years (3.087), Sig(0.04) .

**Table (6) Relation between education and time spent with children**

Groups	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	f-test	Sig.
Between groups	5.878	2	2.939	7.922	.000
Within groups	78.652	212	.371		
Total	84.530	214			

This table reveals there is a highly positive relationship between nurse's education and their time spent with children .F-test of ANOVA F (7.922) sig (0.000)

## Discussion

The result of the study indicates that the majority of the sample (60.8%) is females, (57.2%) of the them at age group (26-35) years (Table 1), and this is because most of the nurses employed are female.

The report of Jordan ministry of health shows that the most of the nurses are female. Under 30 years and tend to work among hospital professionals evaluating child maltreatment <sup>(6)</sup>

Most of the studies sample (50.9%) are those with BNS degree, while (40.2%) of them are graduates of nursing institute with diploma degree (table 1).

Jordanian nurses and midwives council (2003) indicates that the nurses in hospitals are collage graduate and have BNS degree, and nurses should have BNS degree to be registered in (JNMC).

The table also shows that (69.2%) of the sample are married. this higher percentage in the reflects the attitude of our society toward marriage as a preferable social frame.

The result shows that the bulk of the sample (40.2%) of the nurses has (1-5) years of work and (30.3) of them have (6-10) years of work. 58% of the nurses spread more than (42) house with the child, 59.8% of them have children...

The result of finding revealed that; no significant differences were noted among nurses regarding reporting procedure (Table 2).

The majority of nurses indicate that they don't have knowledge about reporting procedure and professional statutory, ethical responsibilities and they don't have back ground about laws and system of child abuse in their countries. And also most of them believe that they are unsure when suspect child abuse to contact with authorities (Table 3)

This may be explained due to the lack of knowledge about child abuse and reporting behavior and also the lack of confidence in knowledge may represent an important barrier to report suspicion of child abuse cases.

This result is supported by Schweitzer and others who state that the majority of medical practitioners indicate that they had statutory responsibilities to report suspected child abuse and neglect. And they believed that they had professional-ethical obligations for reporting child abuse and neglect <sup>(2)</sup>.

The result shows that there is a significant difference among the nurses of the sample about whom they report. The nurse believes that the teacher is a good reporter for reporting child abuse. And ignore their role as nurses (Table 3).

Baker (1999) found that the abuse investigation is often a group effort involving medical personnel Social Workers, police officers and other <sup>(2)</sup>.

But Teegan F,(1996) reported in his study that the nurses in victoria state in Australian Capital Territory are responsible to report sexual and physical abuse and in south Ausstralia and tousmania state are responsible to report all types of abuse<sup>(8)</sup>.

The data analysis shows no significant difference among nurses about training and educations regarded child abuse and reporting behavior (Table 4), this may be because the nurses don't have experience , education and training programs about reporting child abuse, so they may have difficulties in how to report about a suspected child abuse, this result is supported by Jumaian who mentioned that the professionals who contact children , such as physician , teachers and social workers need to be trained to recognize all components of child maltreatment , to detect the maltreated child<sup>(6)</sup>.

Nursing educational program hasn't integrated the concept of child abuse to curriculum, presenting a seriousness that has ability to handle child abuse<sup>(6)</sup>.

The study also shows positive relationship between the years of practicing as a nurse and reporting behavior, (table 5) it revealed that the younger nurses have the ability to do reporting about child abuse and this result goes with the study of Jordan population statistic administration who found that the younger physicians were significantly more likely than older physicians to indicate and report possible physical abuse<sup>(11)</sup>.

In regard to the relation of nurses education and time spent with children suspected abuse and reporting behavior the results shows that there is highly significant positive relationship  $F.7.922$  Sig (0.000) (Table6) .

The nurses own bachelor degree spent more time with children. These findings indicated the importance of nurse's knowledge about child abuse signs and symptoms, reporting procedure, spent enough time with children. this findings supported by Morris who mention that well nursing education can lead to positive attitude and appropriate beliefs regard child abuse and reporting behavior<sup>(10)</sup> .

From the above results we can conclude that the nurses have no ability to record the case of child abuse and inform the responsible people about it.

## Recommendations

- 1-Traning of nurses as well as general guidelines to identification and reporting of child abuse.
- 2-Nurses should take a role in child abuse and reporting procedures.
- 3-Further and more extended studies for nurses about child abuse reporting.
- 4-Continuous nursing education and training program should be arranged with concept of child abuse.

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