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Prevalence and factors associated with physical abuse in ones households in children aged 15-16 years residing in Welikanda Divisional Secretariat area, Sri Lanka

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Background: Child physical abuse is a public health problem worldwide. Welikanda Divisional Secretariat area is one of the highest child abuse prone areas in Sri Lanka. Children aged 15–16 years is an important age group to identify factors associated with physical abuse because they reflect a 15-16 years experience as a child.

Objective: This study was conducted to assess the prevalence and factors associated with physical abuse in ones households in children aged 15-16 years in the Welikanda divisional secretariat area, Sri Lanka.

Methods & Materials: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted recruiting 416 children using the multistage cluster sampling method. Data were obtained from children using a self-administered questionnaire. Descriptive statistics were used to calculate the prevalence and associated factors using logistic regression using statistical package for social sciences version 23.

Results: The prevalence of physical abuse was 60.3%. Children who never had an affair were 0.44 (95% CI: 0.26-0.74) times less likely to be physically abused compared to children who ever had an affair. Children who had more than one sibling were 0.06 (95% CI: 0.01-0.48) times at lesser risk of being physically abused as compared to children who had one sibling. Children of mothers who have had an education atleast up to secondary level were 1.82 (95% CI: 1.10-3.02) times at higher risk of being physically abused than children whose mothers had educated up to primary or less. The risk of physical abuse was 3.79 (95% CI: 2.41-5.97) times higher for children who had experienced domestic violence among parents, compared to children who had not experienced domestic violence.

Conclusion: Highest possibility of being physically abused was seen among children who experinced domestic violence. Therefore, desigining strategies to address domestic violence will be important for preventing child abuse in the Welikanda Divisional Secretariat area, Sri Lanka.