Abstract

Introduction: Recurrent exposure to childhood sexual abuse (CSA) seems to be higher among victims of sexual abuse. In this sense, experiences related to sexual violence can perpetuate within the family context itself in various ways. Here, we investigate the association between being exposed to CSA and having a child victim of sexual violence. Method: We used a sample with 123 mothers, who were divided into 2 groups: one consisting of 41 mothers of sexually abused children and another consisting of 82 mothers of non-sexually abused children. History of exposure to CSA was evaluated by means of the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire – Short Form (CTQ) and we used a logistic regression model to estimate the prediction values regarding having or not a child exposed to sexual violence. Results: Mothers of sexually abused children had significantly higher scores on CTQ, especially on the sexual abuse subscale (SA). According to our logistic regression model, higher scores on the CTQ significantly predicted the status of being a mother of children exposed to sexual violence in our sample (Wald = 7.074; p = 0.008; Exp(B) = 1.681). Years of formal education reduced the likelihood of having a child victim of sexual violence (Wald = 18.994; p = 0.001; Exp(B) = 0.497). Conclusion: Our findings highlight the importance of a possible intergenerational effect of sexual abuse. Family intervention and prevention against childhood maltreatment should take this issue in account.

Keywords

Child sexual abuse, sexual abuse, family violence, intergenerational relations.