

EARLY CHILDHOOD TRAUMA AND ITS LONG-TERM MENTAL HEALTH EFFECT IN KANGEMA CONSTITUENCY, MURANG'A COUNTY

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Introduction

Long-term mental health problems are often caused by early childhood trauma with emotional, physical, sexual, and domestic violence. Such cases in Kangema Constituency of Murang'a County are often accepted as natural, kept hidden, or misunderstood since many people find mental health issues to be taboo. The purpose of this study is to find out how early childhood trauma can continue to harm mental health in Kangema, and why it is important for early interventions to come from the community itself.

Objective

Early Childhood Trauma and its Long-Term Mental Health Effect in Kangema Constituency, Murang'a County

Methods

This study was done using a descriptive research approach. A total of 160 volunteers between the ages of 18 and 35 were picked evenly from different wards in the Kangema Constituency using stratified random sampling to ensure men and women were all included. Information was gathered by using surveys that combined the ACE list with a mental health self-assessment test. The questionnaire tested how much trauma people had experienced, what mental health symptoms they had, and how supported they felt by the community. The research used SPSS for the analysis of data. Based on Cronbach Alpha and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure (KMO = 0.784), the tool proves to be reliable and there are no problems regarding sample size.

Results

It was found that 69% of participants reported having at least one type of ACE, whereas 42% had experienced three or more. A high ACE score was closely connected with depression, anxiety, using substances, and suicidal thoughts at a statistically significant level ($p < 0.05$). Having family help, starting early interventions at school, or counseling in church reduced the mental health issues the participants faced. Barriers to care were mainly caused by cultural stigma, little awareness, and problems in referring patients.

Conclusion

It is confirmed through the study that early childhood trauma causes lasting problems for mental health within Kangema Constituency. Therefore, the use of trauma-informed practices should be adopted in regular health centers and neighborhood settings. Members of schools, churches, and families should learn how to spot signs of trauma and send them to a place where they can get help. Rural areas should be given priority in supporting mental health policies that work on childhood trauma prevention and encouraging resilience.

Keywords:

Childhood Trauma, Mental Health, Aces, Rural Kenya, Kangema, Prevention

References

World Health Organization. (2018). *Adverse Childhood Experiences International Questionnaire (ACE-IQ)*.