

Educate: Don't punish

Dr. Falak Chowdhary, Assistant Surgeon, Department of Health & Family Welfare, Jammu (J&K), India.

Dr. Zoya Chowdhary, Assistant Surgeon, Department of Health & Family Welfare, Jammu (J&K), India.

Aamir Chowdhary, MBBS Student, Hind Institute of Medical Sciences, Lucknow, (UP), India.

Dr. Aniece Chowdhary, Ex-Principal, Government Medical College, Jammu (J&K), India

Citation: Chowdhary, F, Chowdhary Z, Chowdhary A, Chowdhary A. Educate: Don't punish. *Int J Eth Trauma Victimology* 2016; 2(2):21-25. doi: 10.18099/ijetv.v2i02.6857

Article history

Received: August 8, 2016

Received in revised form: Dec 11, 2016

Accepted: Dec 18, 2016

Available online: Dec 28, 2016

Corresponding author

Dr. Zoya Chowdhary Assistant Surgeon, Department of Health & Family Welfare, Jammu (J&K), India.

Phone: +91 9086592679

Email: dr.zoya1988@gmail.com

Abstract

We all have seen/ experienced incidences of corporal punishment, but most of us don't see them as something strange/ to question, and yet it makes us feel uncomfortable. In other words; corporal punishment is just one of the wrong ways to discipline a child. In our society, it is a trend that children in school as well as at home are physically punished if they do not conform to the set social behavior. The punishment varies from physical abuse to psychological abuse. A child responds differently to the menace of corporal punishment and the uncontrolled anger of the parent/ teacher, may result in injuries or even death of the child.

Children respect and admire adults whether parents/ teachers but these punishments may lead to anger and frustration which diminish the intimacy which the child has towards them and to cope up with the persistent abuse, the child indulges in self-destructive activities like alcohol abuse etc and even suicidal attempts. Chronic abuse of the child leads to a breach of the trust between the child and the parent/ teacher causing effects beyond physical/ mental trauma, there is an erosion of the self-esteem, fear of closeness and ill-conceived attempts to avoid unpleasant reminders of child abuse. The use of corporal punishment is strongly rooted in our society and is passed on through generations. However, this doesn't mean that corporal punishment is justified. So, putting an end to corporal punishment is our ethical duty.

Keywords: Corporal punishment, dental injuries, schools.

© IJETV. All rights reserved

Introduction

Corporal punishment is defined as "Any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however, light" by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (1).

Corporal punishment to many people means "the use of physical pain, but not wounds, as a means of

discipline" (2), or in other words; corporal punishment is just one of the wrong ways to discipline a child. Most of us don't see these punishments as something strange, something to be questioned, and yet it does make us feel uncomfortable.

We justify that Corporal punishment may be distinguished from physical abuse via two factors;

Intensity of violence and Intention of the individual (2). But does that mean if a person slaps or hits you with good intentions then you won't feel the pain or feel bad about it?

We all have seen/ experienced incidences of corporal punishment because its use is strongly rooted in our society and is passed on through generations. However, this doesn't mean corporal punishment is justified.

Why punish child

Child discipline is very important – without it, society would have many problems. So, in order to discipline children, we use corporal punishment. However, there are several reasons which come into light as to why to use corporal punishment; few of them may be;

- 'Spare the rod and spoil the child', 'Children need to be molded' 'Children Are Empty Vessels'; this is the kind of thinking which still persist in our society. We think it is appropriate to child education and also it will give a child a bright future. But it is on a contrary the other way round (2).
- The person lacks sufficient resource to tackle a situation/ don't have strategies for achieving what they want to achieve. So it is that frustration which the child has to pay in the name of education/ discipline (3).
- People are not skilled at interpreting the social situations, so out of confusion and irritation, they indulge in corporal punishment (3).
- Some can't control their emotions and as a consequence children become their victims of their anger/ rage/ even frustration (4).
- To some, it is pleasure as it relieves them (2).

Effects of corporal punishment

In our society, there are a set of social rules/ behavior which a child has to abide and if he/ she do not conform to the set social behavior, he/she is subjected to punishment. The punishment may vary from physical abuse to psychological abuse depending upon the adult.

As we all know every child is different so, every child responds differently to the menace of corporal punishment. It has also been seen that the uncontrolled anger of the adult, may result in injuries or even death of the child (4).

Effects of corporal punishment on children (5):

- It lowers the self-esteem of the child.
- It teaches them to be victims in future as well.
- It interferes with the learning process, intellectual, sensory and emotional development.
- It hampers the capacity to understand the relationship between behavior and its consequences.
- It promotes a negative view.
- It creates a barrier between child and adults, be it teach/ parent (6).
- It stimulates anger and desire to run away from home/ school.
- It teaches a child that violence is an accepted and the best way to tackle a problem.
- Such children experience difficulties with social integration.
- It teaches a child to comply with rules/ to infringe them.
- As is evident, many children suffer from accidental physical injuries.

Effects of corporal punishment on adults (2):

- It produces a feeling of anxiety and guilt.
- The use of corporal punishment increases the probability that parents will show aggressive behavior in the future with growing frequency and intensity and also in other contexts (4).
- Inhibits communication and damages the relationship between parents/ teachers and their children (5).

Children respect and admire adults whether parents/ teachers but these punishments may lead to anger and frustration which diminish the intimacy which the child has towards them and to cope up with the persistent abuse, the child indulges in self-destructive activities like alcohol abuse etc and even suicidal attempts (6),(7).

Chronic abuse of the child leads to a breach of the trust between the child and the parent/ teacher causing effects beyond physical/ mental trauma, there is an erosion of the self-esteem, fear of closeness and ill-conceived attempts to avoid unpleasant reminders of child abuse (5).

News/ articles/facts

UNICEF statistics collected in 62 countries between 2005 and 2013 found that on average about four in five children aged 2-14 had experienced violent "discipline" (physical punishment and/or psychological aggression) at home. On average, 17% of children experienced severe physical punishment (being hit on the head, face or ears or hit hard and repeatedly) at home (8).

"A girl child who tried to commit suicide by jumping into a river as she couldn't tolerate the punishment (9)."

"Even parents asked teachers to be stern with them and put them into discipline by way of slapping children if they did not behave properly or do their work (10)."

"According to the Raghavan committee, corporal punishment in schools was a contributory factor in the development of bullying tactics and ragging tendencies in students as per the observation of the supreme court of India (11)."

"In Medhanpalli village of Ranga Reddy district of Andhra Pradesh state in India, one teacher named Rose Merry poured molten wax from burning candle over groin region of a girl student of UKG and burned her skin. The teacher wanted the child to confess that she had stolen the money of a fellow student. A case was registered against the teacher (12)."

"11year old girl of MCD School was punished for not doing the homework, was asked to stand in sun for >1hr (13)."

As is evidenced by the 'voices' profiled above corporal punishment does not mean physical violence on the child, but also verbal insults, humiliation, and loss of self-esteem. Self-perception of children gets altered if not wholly destroyed even before it emerges by such inhuman acts on tender minds.

Rights That Are Affected By Corporal Punishment (5):

- Right not to be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment
- Right to be protected from violence and abuse
- Right to development, including the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health
- Right to dignity and bodily integrity.

How to prevent & control

Corporal punishment is exacerbated through social acceptance; as the majority of us believe smacking to be indispensable sometimes. For this reason, a nationwide social awareness campaign against corporal punish should be initiated, with objectives as follows (2),(14):

- Raising public awareness; about consequences.
- Encouraging positive and non-violent methods of child education and care in families and schools.
- Informing children about their rights.

It involves actions in schools, universities, different childhood associations and the media, and to provide training in different autonomous communities between parents and professionals involved in child care.

We should organize public debates, conferences and seminars on the Rights of the Child to make them aware (15).

Alternatives to corporal punishment are the best solution. The Legal Assistance Centre has also produced a movie on alternatives to corporal punishment "**A Betta Way**" which shows many other ways that children can be punished.(5) Here are four examples (15):

1. Explain the problem.
2. Make children take responsibility for their actions.

3. "Timeout": Sometimes children become overexcited and this can lead to bad behavior. It can be effective to take the child out of the room to calm down, sit quietly and think about what he or she has done wrong.
4. Take away privileges.

National commission for protection of child rights (**NCPCR**) has included slapping, beating with a scale, pinching, locking student alone in the room, making student sit like a chair or kneeling down and making a child run in the school as corporal punishment so as to give a direction to the teachers to forbid them from these practices. They have issued a set of guidelines on corporal punishment (16).

Parents should be particularly careful about the incidences in school and should promote communication with their children to detect and avoid cases of corporal punishment and should not hesitate to report cases of corporal punishment in schools to the school authorities so that repetition does not occur (17).

There is a growing appreciation for addressing the issue of corporal punishment as an act of violence (18). High Courts of Delhi (19), Chandigarh (20) as well as various other states, have banned corporal punishment for school children. There are many provisions through which the State can intervene on banning corporal punishment (16):

- The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act, 2006
- The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Rules, 2007
- The National Policy on Education (1986)
- The National Charter for Children (2003)
- National Plan of Action for Children 2005 (NPA)
- United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child, 1989 (*India acceded to this convention in 1992*)
- Constitution of India: *Article 3, 19, 21, 28, 37, 39, 40, 42*

Conclusion

Corporal punishment is just one of the wrong ways to discipline a child leading to erosion of the self-esteem, fear of closeness and ill-conceived attempts to avoid unpleasant reminders of child abuse. As the

use of corporal punishment is strongly rooted in our society and is passed on through generations, this doesn't mean that corporal punishment is justified. So, putting an end to corporal punishment is our ethical duty.

There are rules and judgments by the courts which admonish corporal punishment but still the corporal punishment is being practiced in various parts of the country; reason being the lack of awareness about the laws and fallouts of corporal punishment on the future life of children.

Child discipline is very important so, alternatives to corporal punishment should be chosen to educate/discipline them.

"Your hands should nurture not punish them."

References

1. United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, U.N. Doc. CRC/C/GC/8. 2 March 2007, Editor, 42nd Sess., U.N.Doc. CRC/C/GC/8. General comment No. 8 (2006): The right of the child to protection from corporal punishment and/ cruel or degrading forms of punishment (articles 1, 28(2), and 37, inter alia. 2007.
2. Educate, Don't punish: Awareness campaign against corporal punishment of children in families. First session. Save the Children. UNICEF, CEAPA, CONCAPA; 1999 Oct.
3. Lansford JE, Deater-Deckard K, Bornstein MH, Putnick DL, Bradley RH. Attitudes justifying domestic violence predict endorsement of corporal punishment and physical and psychological aggression towards children: A study in 25 low-and middle-income countries. *J Pediatr.* 2014;164(5):1208–13.
4. Taylor CA, Lee SJ, Guterman NB, Rice JC. Use of spanking for 3-year-old children and associated intimate partner aggression or violence. *Pediatrics.* 2010;peds – 2010.
5. Basic facts about corporal punishment. Fact sheet Gender Research & Advocacy Project. Legal Assistance Center, Windhoek, Namibi;
6. Corporal punishment to children: review of research on its impact and association, working paper. London: Global initiative to end all corporal punishment of children.; 2015.
7. Oliver M. Spanking: Questions & Answers about disciplinary violence. 2005;
8. Unicef, others. Hidden in plain sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children. 2014 [cited 2016 Dec 17]; Available from: <http://www.chimat.org.uk/resource/item.aspx?RID=212165>
9. Amar Ujala 5(122). 2007;1.

10. Singh R. Disciplining the child. *The Tribune* 127(224). late city ed. 2007;14.
11. File criminal cases in ragging incidents: SC,. *The Tribune* 127(135). late city ed. 2007;1.
12. Press Trust of India. Be-raham shikshak ne garm mom se massom chhatar ki jangh jalai. *Dainik Jagran* 2(45). 2009;8.
13. HT Correspondent. School girl sent to stand in sun, critical. *Hindustan Times*. 2009;1.
14. Jean D, Lormand D, Waxweiler R. Developing policies to prevent injuries and violence: guidelines for policy-makers and planners. World Health Organization; 2006.
15. Gorea A, Gorea L, Gorea RK, Arora A. Holistic approach to prevent injuries and corporal punishments in schools. *Egypt J Forensic Sci.* 2011;1(1):25–9.
16. Protection of Children against Corporal Punishment In Schools and Institutions. National Commission for the Protection of child rights; 2008.
17. Gorea RK. Corporal punishment in schools: Global status and remedial measures. *Int J Ethics Trauma Vict.* 2015;1(2):6–8.
18. Indiana corporal punishment in public schools laws [Internet]. Available from: FindLaw.htm
19. Parents forum for meaningful education and another vs. Union of India and another. 1998.
20. *The Tribune* 120(33). City ed. 2000;1.