Intention to participate in child sexual abuse prevention programs: a study of Chinese adults in Hong Kong

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Abstract

Objectives: This study aimed to explore factors relating to intention to participate in community child sexual abuse (CSA) prevention programs among Chinese adults in Hong Kong.

Method: A total of 1,606 Chinese adults (497 men and 1,109 women) were individually interviewed about their intention to participate in community CSA prevention programs, endorsement of myths about CSA, their acquaintance with CSA victims, worry about CSA, and perceived prevalence of CSA.

Results: Among participants, nearly two-thirds believed CSA involved physical injuries of victims, 40% perceived boys as unlikely victims of CSA, and one-third were skeptical about children’s reports of CSA. About 24% of participants reported that they would definitely take part in CSA prevention programs. Participants who showed definite intention to participate in these programs endorsed fewer myths in relation to CSA, showed more worry about children being at risk of sexual abuse, perceived CSA as more prevalent and involving more physical injuries of victims, and were more likely to be women.

Conclusions: Attention should be addressed to predisposing factors of adult participation in CSA prevention programs.

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Keywords: Sexual abuse prevention; Child sexual abuse; Adult participation

Introduction

Sexual violence against children exists across cultural and societal boundaries, despite variations in its prevalence, form, and definition (Finkelhor, 1994; Fontes, 1995; Futa, Hsu, & Hansen, 2001;