

Child Abuse

1. Motivation behind research paper

The abuse of children under the age of 18 has been on the rise in recent years in Japan. The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare announced that the number of child abuse cases nationwide in 2020 was 205,000, three times more than ten years ago. The term “child abuse” includes, physical, sexual, psychological, mental, and neglect. I will investigate this topic by dividing it into three axes: why abuse is not eliminated, how to eliminate abuse, and what we can do to reduce the number child abuse cases.

2. Introduction

The aim of this research paper is to research why abuse is not eliminated, how to eliminate abuse, and what we can do to reduce the number child abuse cases.

I would like to address the definition of abuse. The definition of child abuse established by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare is as follows;

- Physical abuse: Beating, kicking, hitting, throwing, shaking violently, burning, drowning, strangling, restraining in a room with ropes, etc.
- Sexual abuse: Sexual acts on children, showing sexual acts, touching or having them touch genitals, making them the subject of pornography, etc.

- Neglect: Keeping them at home, not giving them food, making them extremely dirty, leaving them in cars, not taking them to the hospital when they are seriously ill, etc.
- Psychological abuse: Verbal threats, ignoring, discriminatory treatment between siblings, domestic violence in front of the child (DV: Domestic Violence), abusive siblings, etc.

3. Results and Analysis

The Child Abuse Prevention Law was enacted in 2000, and since then, the law has been amended and efforts by related organizations have been strengthened. According to the verification by the "Special Committee on Investigating Cases of Child Abuse and Other Cases Requiring Protection" set up in the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare's Social Security Council Children's Subcommittee, the number of cases where children die due to abuse rises by around 100 each year. About 40% of the cases (other than suicide) are 0-year-old children who cannot raise their voices.

Efforts against child abuse span a wide range, from outbreak prevention to early detection and response, and long-term child protection and support, and collaboration by many stakeholders is essential. In order to strengthen the early detection and response to abuse, it is necessary to strengthen information sharing and cooperation among child guidance centers, municipalities, and the police. It is also important to work together to strengthen the detection and protection of "missing children," whose abuse may be hidden.

In order to prevent the occurrence of abuse, it is important to cooperate with doctors and provide support to expectant and nursing mothers who have difficulty raising children from the time they are pregnant. Furthermore, it is necessary to provide appropriate temporary protection and long-term support, including mental care, to children who have been victimized. According to the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, the number of child abuse consultations handled by 215 child guidance centers nationwide was 205,029 based on preliminary reports in FY2020. It increased by 5.8% compared to the previous year, and is more than 11.5 times higher than 20 years ago. Especially in recent years, the rate of increase has been high.

4. Conclusion and Future Problems

One reason that child abuse persists is that most abusive families see public institutions as their "enemy." Even in actual cases of abuse, there are statements that "the child guidance center was noisy", and the abuse is aggravated in a blind spot that the government can't see or control. However, the parties were not hostile to the administration from the beginning. Rather, there are many cases where they go to the city hall or ward office many times to ask for help and complain about their plight. After being sent to various counters and made to tell the same story over and over again, they were showered with condescending words, the support they wanted was rejected, and they cleared a certain standard in light of laws, ordinances, past operations, etc.

Future policies include expanding the number of child guidance centers and strengthening their functions, making it easier to limit parental authority, sharing

information on all cases between child guidance centers and the police, supporting foster parents and special adoptions, and providing support for foster parents and families. It is clearly stated that the expansion of temporary shelters, such as homes, has not progressed much.

Even if there is a family that you are concerned about, I think there are many people who hesitate to report it because they will be driven into a corner. However, providing information to specialized agencies is also the first step for families to receive appropriate support. As a result, even if it does not lead to abuse, it will also lead to grasping the parents who have troubles and difficulties in raising children. Calling "189" will connect you directly to the nearest Child Guidance Center. The person in charge at the Child Guidance Center will ask you where and what kind of situation you saw. Notifications and consultations can be made anonymously. Even if you tell them your name, the Child Abuse Prevention Law stipulates that the Child Guidance Center must not divulge any information that can identify the person who made the report, so the other party will not be informed. Some people obtain qualifications and enter the field of childcare support or become involved in learning how to become support volunteers, and it is important to connect and support as much as possible.

Under the Child Welfare Law, there is an obligation to report "a person who finds a child who should not be in custody of a guardian". In addition, "Schools, child welfare facilities, hospitals, and other organizations that have a business relationship with child welfare, school teachers, staff of child welfare facilities, doctors, public health nurses, lawyers, and other persons with a business relationship with child

welfare” should be involved. They must be aware that we are in a position where it is easy to detect child abuse, and we must strive to detect child abuse at an early stage.

For example, crying children, angry voices of parents, unnatural bruises and burns, extreme malnutrition and developmental delay, rough language, extreme silence, lack of facial expressions, excessive defiant attitude toward adults, frowning, unwillingness to go home, words and deeds unsuitable for age and place. The signs of abuse are hidden in everyday life. Of course, there are still many administrative issues to be addressed, such as strengthening the functions of child care facilities and child guidance centers, making it easier for people to receive support, and collaborate with educational institutions and the police. I think that is what we can do.

5. Reflections

Child abuse is a familiar problem. I believe that if many people take an interest in this issue, the number of people going to elections and participating in petitions will increase in order to revise laws and improve the field. Also, I believe that child abuse can be eliminated if further progress is made in support for pregnancy, childbirth, double-income families, single-parent families, and the eliminating childcare waiting lists. It is necessary to brighten up society in order to reduce the number of deaths from abuse to 0 so that everyone can become an adult as a matter of course.

6. Work cited

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. Definition and Current Situation of Child Abuse. Web. 14 July 2022.