

Child Maltreatment Prevention Readiness Assessment in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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Abstract : Global efforts are being made to combat child maltreatment (CM); however, in 2011 the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's (KSA) response to this issue was found to be mediocre. Several developments have been implemented in KSA since then, and reevaluation is now necessary. The aim of this study is to assess the CM-prevention readiness (CMPR) of KSA in regard to implementing large-scale, evidence-based CM-prevention programs. Participants were decision makers and senior managers in the field of CM. Face-to-face interviews were conducted in the participants' offices. This was a cross-sectional study. We used the multi-dimensional tool "Readiness Assessment for the Prevention of Child Maltreatment - short version," which examines ten dimensions concerning this topic. Comparison between the results of this study and those of the 2011 examination was performed to determine how the situation in KSA has changed. Sixty informants were interviewed; the majority being females (57%) and from governmental institutions (56%). The average total score for the ten dimensions was 47.4%, an increase from the 43.7% reported in 2011. The strongest dimensions were legislations and mandates (8.3/10), followed by knowledge (7.1/10) and institutional links and resources (5.8/10). The lowest scores concerned human and technical resources (1.7/10) and attitude towards CM (2.8/10). Compared to the 2011 results, some dimensions showed significant improvements, but the majority had remained consistent. Time and commitment are necessary to secure CMPR improvement. Periodic assessment of CMPR is required to provide proper recommendations to the government regarding the progress of CM-prevention strategies.

Keywords : assessment, child maltreatment, prevention, readiness, Saudi Arabia

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