

Comparison of Clinical Profiles of Patients Seen in a Women and Children Protection Unit in a Local Government Hospital in Makati, Philippines Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic Between January 2018 to February 2020 and March 2020 to December 2021

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Abstract : Background: The declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted hospital visits of child abuse cases with less consults but more severe injuries. Objective: The study aims to identify the clinical profiles of patients seen in the hospital ng Makati Women and Children Protection Unit before and during the pandemic. Design: A cross-sectional analytic study design through review of records that underwent quantitative analysis. Results: 264 cases pre-pandemic and 208 cases during the pandemic were reviewed. Most reported cases were neglect comprising of 47% of the pre-pandemic cases and 68% of cases during the pandemic. Supervisory neglect was most commonly reported. An equal distribution between males and females were seen among victims and alleged perpetrators. The age group of both victims and alleged perpetrators during the pandemic was significantly younger compared to the pre-pandemic period. Children belonging to larger family groups were commonly encountered with most of them being the eldest amongst siblings. Alleged perpetrators were mostly secondary graduates for both time periods. A significant increase of cases during the pandemic occurred at home. More patients required hospitalization during the pandemic period with 37% compared to the 23% of admissions prior to the pandemic. Furthermore, a three-fold increase of injuries sustained during the pandemic required intensive care. Conclusion: The study reflects increased severity of injuries related to abuse during the pandemic compared to pre-pandemic times. A significant increase in injuries requiring intensive care were also seen despite less reported cases.

Keywords : child abuse, COVID-19, violence against children, WCPU, neglect

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