

Child Sexual Abuse Prevention: Evaluation of the Program “Sharing Mouth to Mouth: My Body, Nobody Can Touch It”

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Abstract : Sexual violence, and particularly child sexual abuse, is a serious problem all over the world, Mexico included. Given its importance, there are several preventive and care programs done by the government and the civil society all over the country but most of them are developed in urban areas even though these problems are especially serious in rural areas. Yucatán, a state in southern Mexico, occupies one of the first places in child sexual abuse. Considering the above, the University Unit of Clinical Research and Victimological Attention (UNIVICT) of the Autonomous University of Yucatan, designed, implemented and is currently evaluating the program named “Sharing Mouth to Mouth: My Body, Nobody Can Touch It”, a program to prevent child sexual abuse in rural communities of Yucatán, Mexico. Its aim was to develop skills for the detection of risk situations, providing protection strategies and mechanisms for prevention through culturally relevant psycho-educative strategies to increase personal resources in children, in collaboration with parents, teachers, police and municipal authorities. The diagnosis identified that a particularly vulnerable population were children between 4 and 10 years. The program run during 2015 in primary schools in the municipality whose inhabitants are mostly Mayan. The aim of this paper is to present its evaluation in terms of its effectiveness and efficiency. This evaluation included documental analysis of the work done in the field, psycho-educational and recreational activities with children, evaluation of knowledge by participating children and interviews with parents and teachers. The results show high efficiency in fulfilling the tasks and achieving primary objectives. The efficiency shows satisfactory results but also opportunity areas that can be resolved with minor adjustments to the program. The results also show the importance of including culturally relevant strategies and activities otherwise it minimizes possible achievements. Another highlight is the importance of participatory action research in preventive approaches to child sexual abuse since by becoming aware of the importance of the subject people participate more actively; in addition to design culturally appropriate strategies and measures so that the proposal may not be distant to the people. Discussion emphasizes the methodological implications of prevention programs (convenience of using participatory action research (PAR), importance of monitoring and mediation during implementation, developing detection skills tools in creative ways using psycho-educational interactive techniques and working assessment issued by the participants themselves). As well, it is important to consider the holistic character this type of program should have, in terms of incorporating social and culturally relevant characteristics, according to the community individuality and uniqueness, consider type of communication to be used and children’s language skills considering that there should be variations strongly linked to a specific cultural context.

Keywords : child sexual abuse, evaluation, PAR, prevention

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