

An Analysis of Socio-Demographics, Living Conditions, and Physical and Emotional Child Abuse Patterns in the Context of the 2010 Haiti Earthquake

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Abstract : Objective: The aim of this study is to i) investigate the socio-demographics and living conditions of households in Haiti pre- and post 2010 earthquake, ii) determine the household prevalence of emotional and physical abuse in children (aged 2-14) after the earthquake, and iii) explore the association between earthquake-related loss and experience of emotional and physical child abuse in the household while considering potential confounding variables and the interactive effects of a number of social, economic, and demographic factors. Methods: A nationally representative sample of Haitian households from the 2005/6 and 2012 phases of the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) was used. Descriptive analysis was summarized using frequencies and measures of central tendency. Chi-squared and independent t-tests were used to compare data that was available pre-earthquake and post-earthquake. The association between experiences of earthquake-related loss and emotional and physical child abuse was assessed using log-binomial regression models. Results: Comparing pre-post-earthquake, noteworthy improvements were observed in the educational attainment of the household head (9.1% decrease in "no education" category) and in possession of the following household items: electricity, television, mobile-phone, and radio post-earthquake. Approximately 77.0% of children aged 2-14 experienced at least one form of physical abuse and 78.5% of children experienced at least one form of emotional abuse one month prior to the 2012 survey period. Analysis regarding the third objective (association between experiences of earthquake-related loss and emotional and physical child abuse) is in progress. Conclusions: The extremely high prevalence of emotional and physical child abuse in Haiti indicates an immediate need for improvements in the enforcement of existing policies and interventions aimed at decreasing child abuse in the household.

Keywords : Haiti earthquake, physical abuse, emotional abuse, natural disasters, children

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