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Adults Who Experienced Domestic Abuse as Children in the UK: Initial Findings from a Qualitative Pilot Study

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Health impact children (Stream 7), Hall C, september 3, 2019, 14.30 - 16.00

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Aim

This presentation will disseminate findings from a qualitative pilot study carried out in the UK with 10 adults who experienced domestic abuse as children.

Background

89% of results from a review of the literature overwhelmingly conclude that being an adult survivor of childhood domestic abuse (DA) results in negative outcomes such as: depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder; relationship difficulties; lack of educational attainment and alcohol issues. The dominance of negative based literature, typically quantitative, excludes considerations of how people cope with DA. Only 11% of research generated discussions of how adults coped or developed ways of dealing with DA experienced as children. Of these 5 articles, 4 were American and 1, Australian. Only 1 study out of 46 exclusively looked at adult males who experienced DA as children, a mere 2% of the literature.

Methods

An online survey consisting of 12 questions followed by a semi-structured interview was completed by 10 adults who volunteered to participate in a pilot study and were aged 25 years and over.

Findings

Previous research has failed to recognise the potential for agentic coping responses or taken account of other variables such as the frequency and level of abuse and violence, which may be impacting upon the situation and may be serving as either protective or addition impacts. This research highlights factors that can have an ameliorating effect which inform resilience and coping responses including environmental and ecological factors.

Conclusion/Recommendations Further research which examines the nature of a child's relationship to the primary caregiver, perpetrator and significant others is needed to further investigate the differences in the functioning ability amongst adults who experienced childhood DA.