

Child Maltreatment



Worldwide,
1 in 4 adults were
physically abused
as children.

The Health Sector Responds



World Health
Organization

What is Child Maltreatment?

It's the abuse and neglect of children. It takes many forms.

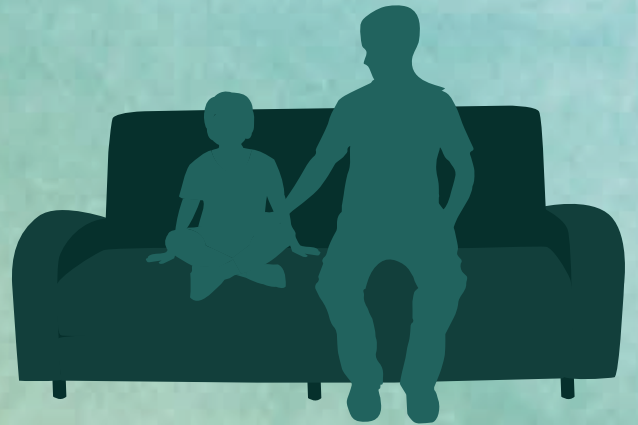
Physical abuse

Hitting, beating, shaking



Sexual abuse

Sexual contact or exposure to sexual acts or materials



Emotional or psychological abuse

Threatening, insulting, ridiculing, confining



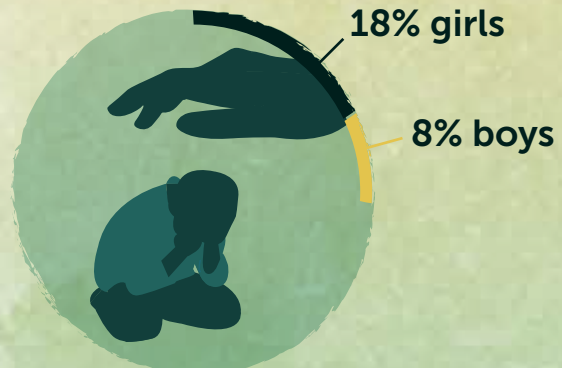
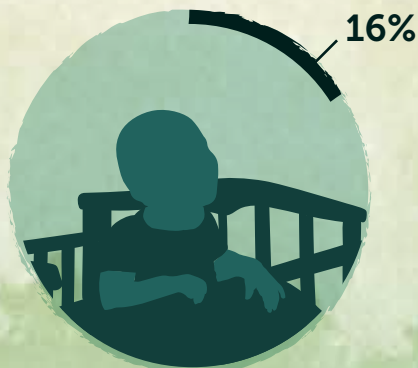
Neglect

Failing, despite having the means, to provide medical care, education, shelter or other essentials for a child's healthy development

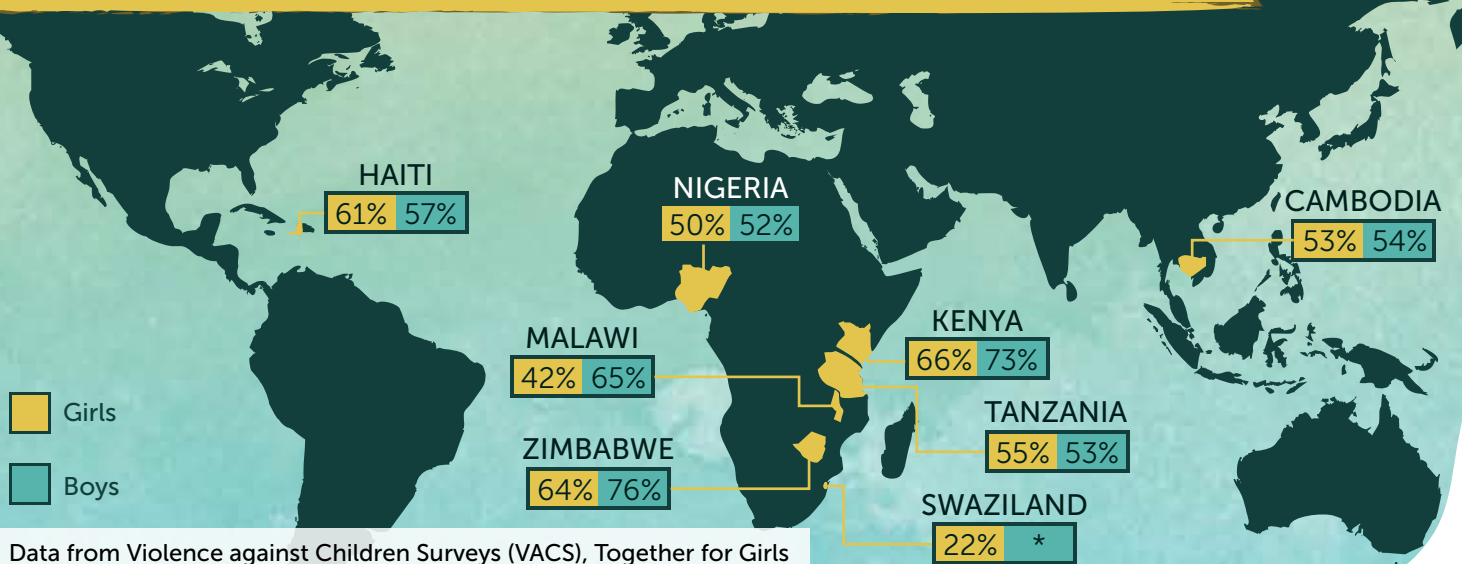


Child maltreatment is widespread.

Worldwide children report that they suffered some form of violence in the past year:



Data spotlight: Percentage of individuals aged 18-24 years who experienced physical violence prior to age 18



Child maltreatment has serious consequences.

The effects can be immediate.

Victims of child maltreatment can suffer serious injuries — or die.



Every year, about 41,000 children under 15 years are victims of homicide.

More deaths from child maltreatment go unreported — since they're incorrectly documented as due to other causes.

The consequences can also last a lifetime.

Adults who were abused or neglected as children have a higher risk of:



Perpetrating or being a victim of violence



Depression



Obesity



High-risk sexual behaviours and unintended pregnancies



Harmful use of tobacco, drugs, and alcohol

Studies show that child maltreatment has high economic costs — in medical expenses, legal costs, and lost productivity.



Child maltreatment can actually slow a country's economic and social development.



What increases the risk of child maltreatment?

Having parents or caregivers who

- Suffered abuse or neglect as children
- Misuse drugs or alcohol
- Are involved in other forms of violence, such as intimate partner violence



Living in communities that

- Have high unemployment
- Lack support services for families
- Have high tolerance for violence



Living in societies that

- Don't have adequate legislation to address child maltreatment
- Have cultural norms that promote or glorify violence
- Have social, economic, and health policies that lead to poor living standards or socio-economic inequality



Research shows that children **with disabilities** are four times more likely to suffer from abuse or neglect.



These are strategies that can prevent child maltreatment.



Parent and caregiver support to teach parents about child development and healthy positive strategies for raising children



Promote norms and values that support pro-social, non-violent behaviour



Education and life skills training to improve children's knowledge of abusive situations and teach them social skills to protect themselves and to interact in positive ways

They can be effective across the globe.



Income and economic strengthening interventions to increase investments in children



Response and support services to help children that have been exposed to violence



Creating and sustaining safe environments for children



Implementation and enforcement of laws, such as laws banning violent punishment of children by parents, teachers or other caregivers

The health sector has a crucial role in addressing child maltreatment.

1

Raise awareness about the long-term negative health effects and social burden of child maltreatment – both in the health sector and other sectors

2

Collect and communicate data about prevalence, risk factors, and health consequences of child maltreatment

3

Develop and test evidence-based interventions to prevent child maltreatment – like home visits with nurses, or parenting programmes held in provider's offices or health facilities

4

Provide support and services to victims of child maltreatment, including mental health and psychosocial services

5

Collaborate with other sectors to address child maltreatment – especially social welfare, protection, education and criminal justice sectors



WHO Resources:

- INSPIRE: Seven strategies for Ending Violence Against Children
http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/inspire/en/
- Preventing child maltreatment: a guide to taking action and generating evidence.
http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/43499/1/9241594365_eng.pdf



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