Pregnant girl after sexual abuse

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Abstract

Sexual abuse is defined as the involvement in developmentally immature children or adolescents in sexual activities that they do not fully comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent and that violate social taboos of family or other adult-child relationships. We present one of the more drastic and obvious cases of sexual abuse in adolescents – which has been observed in childhood and adolescent gynecology ambulatory pregnant girl after sexual abuse.

Key words: sexual abuse, child, gynecological evaluation, adolescent pregnancy

Sexual abuse is the most detrimental form of child maltreatment. Sexual abuse is defined as the involvement in developmentally immature children or adolescents in sexual activities that they do not fully comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent and that violate social taboos of family or other adult-child relationships. Some studies of adolescent mothers and pregnant adolescents have documented a high prevalence of sexual abuse, ranging from 43% to 62% [1]. However, other studies of pregnant teenagers have reported a sexual abuse prevalence of 15-26% [2], rates no higher than those most commonly reported for the general population of women [3]. Whereas data on a small group of college women suggested that those who had been sexually abused were at no higher risk for early pregnancy than their peers who had not been abused [4]. Findings from a population-based sample indicated that women who had been abused before age 18 were at increased risk of having an unintended pregnancy [5].

Case report

A patient, aged 14 years, 3 years after menarche, came to a childhood and adolescents gynecology ambulatory because of a lack of menstruation in the last 2 months. According to Tanner scale: Th4 A4 P4. The gynecological examination showed that the girl had regular sexual contacts, about which she did not inform the doctors. A full gynecological examination together with USG showed a 9 week pregnancy. The examination was carried out three times and each time no FHR was shown – graviditas obsoleta. Further psychological and medical examination showed that the girl was sexually abused by her neighbour, whom the girl's father allowed to abuse the girl in return for alcohol. In a gynecological clinic D&C (Dilatation and Curettage) was performed. The case qualified for sexual abuse was reported to the local prosecutor office. The culprit was detained and legal support was granted for the family. Gynecological examination performed in the girl's two sisters revealed lack of hygienic and educational care. Fortunately in the girls no traces of sexual abuse were detected. The patient lives in home run by nuns where she also continues her education. The described case is one of the more drastic and obvious cases of sexual abuse in adolescents which has been observed in childhood and adolescent gynecology ambulatory.

Between 1994-2007 the ambulatory doctors met 56 cases of suspected sexual abuse (sexual abuse includes a spectrum of sexual activities ranging from nontouching to invasive penetrative abuse).

Discussion

Among a sample of women considered to be at risk for acquiring STD (sexually transmitted diseases), those who reported sexual abuse were three times as likely as those who had not experienced abuse to become pregnant before 18 years of age [7]. In a study of sexually experienced adolescents, those who had ever been forced to have sexual intercourse were significantly more likely than others to have ever been pregnant [8].

While it is clear that forced sexual intercourse may directly result in pregnancy among pubescent adolescents, the path by which sexual abuse at young ages leads to teenage pregnancy is less direct and requires exploration. Consideration of the nature and context of a girl's early sexual experiences is necessary in understanding why some teenagers may be more likely than others to become pregnant. Premature, exploitative and coercive sexual experiences may form the social-emotional context for early pregnancy [9]. Among the possible consequences of childhood sexual abuse are promiscuity and the self-perception of being promiscuous [10] being the victim of coercive sex later in life [11]; and poor self-concept, low self-esteem and decreased locus of control [12].

Girls may be placed at increased risk for early pregnancy if they fear that they are unable to conceive. In a study of low-income, nulliparaous adolescents, those with a history of sexual abuse were more likely than others to report that they were trying to conceive and feared that they were unable to do so [13]. Although the nature of sexual abuse reported in various studies may differ in terms of type, duration, and relationship.
and age of the victim and perpetrator; any unwanted sexual experience and the perception of abuse contribute to increased sexual risk behavior and low self-esteem [14]. Specific guidelines should be adopted for the evaluation of sexually abused children to make veracious expertise and not to cause the victim any new trauma. Physician is obliged to objectively document findings as well as inform public prosecutor about the crime.

Adolescent pregnancy is a multidimensional public health problem. Therefore, successful prevention strategies must address its many and complex aspects, including the important role of sexual abuse.

Conclusion

Sexual abuse includes a spectrum of sexual activities ranging from non-touching to invasive penetrative abuse – somatic symptoms may not be observed in sexually abused children so psychological evaluation is necessary in each suspected case.

There is doctors', teachers' and psychologists' important task to provide quick and reliable identification of a crime to enable therapy of a victim and legal action against a criminal.

References


