

Some Perceived Parental Undesirable Behaviours Predicting Child Sexual, Physical and Emotional Abuse: A Study Among a Sample of University Students in South Africa

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KEY WORDS Parental undesirable behaviours; child abuse; university students; South Africa

ABSTRACT This is an investigation into some perceived parental undesirable behaviours that may predict child sexual, physical and emotional abuse among a sample of university students in South Africa. 722 undergraduate students of psychology at the University of the North, South Africa, filled in a retrospective self-rating questionnaire in a classroom setting. The questionnaire asked questions about perceived parental undesirable behaviours during childhood, and childhood sexual, physical and emotional abuse. Logistic Regression Analysis shows that among all the participants, 'parent haven gone into a psychiatric hospital for psychiatric problems' and 'parent haven had problems with drugs or alcohol' predict child sexual abuse. 'Participant's feeling of being mistreated because of parental psychiatric problems' and 'parent hitting or beating up the other parent' predict child physical abuse. Again, 'Parent hitting or beating up the other parent' predict child emotional abuse. Mental health and social workers, educators and law enforcement agencies dealing with prevention and protection against child abuse in the province should take note of the above identified risk factors while designing programmes for the eradication of child sexual, physical and emotional abuse.