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Intellectual Profile of Sexually Abused Children in Japan: An analysis of WISC-III Subtests compared with Physically Abused, Neglected, and Non-Maltreated Children

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ABSTRACT

In previous studies, a subtest profile of the Wechsler series test was used to characterize maltreated children. Specifically, a higher score on the Picture Completion suggested hypervigilance symptoms related to post-traumatic stress disorder (Frankel et al., 2000). The aim of this study was to replicate the previous study using Japanese children and to extend the findings by examining the types of maltreatment, especially focusing on child sexual abuse. Participants were selected retrospectively from records at a Child Guidance Center, where maltreated children were protected, assessed, and treated in Japan. Data of 12 sexually abused children, 12 physically abused, 12 neglected, and 12 non-maltreated, matched for sex and age, were collected. All children had completed the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children third edition Japanese version; 10 core subtests were used as dependent variables and Full Scale IQ was used as a covariate. Analysis of covariance showed significant differences on both the Picture Completion and Vocabulary subtests among groups. Post-hoc tests indicated that sexually abused children scored higher than non-maltreated comparisons on the Picture Completion test, but there were no significant differences on the Vocabulary test between sexual abuse and other groups. These findings replicate and extend the results reported in previous studies. The clinical implication of this study within the Japanese cultural context suggests that sexually abused children with higher scores on the Picture Completion test should be referred to a child psychiatrist to screen for post-traumatic symptoms.

KEYWORDS

WISC-III, Child Sexual Abuse, Subtest Profile, Intelligence

Cite this paper

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