

The Global Prevalence of Violence against Children: A Disturbing Systematic Review

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We have published prior articles noting the adverse childhood experience of being exposed to some form or physical violence in childhood and poorer outcomes associated with overall health and wellbeing as an adult. Most of these studies have been based in the United States—but the problem of childhood violence is much more global and extends to countries all over the world.

To demonstrate this important point, Hills et al. ([10.1542/peds.2015-4079](#)) report on a systematic review of population-based surveys of the prevalence of prior or past-year violence against children to generate minimum regional and global estimates of the prevalence of this problem. The authors identified 38 reports covering 96 countries, and sadly their results identify a minimum of 50% or more of children in Asia, Africa and Northern Africa who experienced such violence—and that translates into 1 billion children ages 2 to 17 being victims of childhood violence.

This is a startling and concerning finding and a key piece of evidence-based data that will hopefully lead to this problem of physical violence against children becoming a major prevention priority of the United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda goals, announced this past fall that are targeted to be achieved by 2030. It is our duty as pediatricians, if not citizens of the world, to stop the violence to children not just locally but wherever it is occurring—and this paper will hopefully enable us to collaborate with more agencies, governments, and individuals to make this goal achievable within the next decade and a half, if not sooner.

Further Reading

- [Children and Armed Conflict](#)
- [Model for Service Delivery for Developmental Disorders in Low-Income Countries](#)
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