



Violence against children of the world: Burden, consequences and recommendations for action

Globally, the range, scale and burden of all forms of violence against children (VAC) are increasingly visible. Yet VAC as a physical, mental, public and social health concern is only recently gaining the prominence it deserves. Addressing VAC is critical as the outcomes of violence experienced early in life have long-lasting physical and mental health consequences throughout childhood, adolescence, adulthood—inter-generationally and for society as a whole. Negative health outcomes can result in the areas of maternal and child health, mental health, injury, non-communicable diseases, communicable diseases and risk behaviours. Violence is widespread and its most common forms are usually perpetrated by people with whom children interact every day in their homes, schools and communities. In this report, we define the problem, determine the burden and consequences of VAC, describe existing typologies of violence pertinent to children including child labour, children in armed conflict, trafficking of children and gender-based violence; and finally, identify what works both in preventing violence from occurring and ameliorating the effects in its aftermath. Our recommendations for action are aimed both at policy makers and practitioners at national, regional and supra-national levels. We urge pediatricians, health and welfare workers and policy makers to prioritise VAC as an urgent public health issue and call for coordinated efforts in the following areas:

- *Addressing children living in humanitarian contexts*
- *A public health model for VAC in all jurisdictions incorporating monitoring and surveillance as well as prevention responses*
- *More effective integration between the common concerns of violence against women and VAC*
- *A push for hospitals/ health care facilities and schools to serve as useful settings for interventions at the program and systems levels*
- *Inter-sectoral action across all levels—from individual providers to professional societies, public health professionals and policy makers to advocate to end VAC*