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SYSTEMATIC REVIEW / SİSTEMATİK DERLEME

A Look at Physical Child Abuse During COVID-19: A Systematic Review

Büşra İNAÇ YILMAZ [1], Duygu GÖZEN [2]

[1] Istanbul University-Cerrahpaşa Institute of Graduate Studies, Istanbul, Türkiye. **ORCID:** 0000-0003-0539-8559
[2] Koç University Faculty of Nursing, Istanbul, Türkiye. **ORCID:** 0000-0001-9272-3561

ABSTRACT

Objective: This systematic review aims to examine the frequency, risk factors, types of abuse, as well as the early detection, prevention, and intervention roles of nurses in physical child abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Materials and Methods: The review was conducted following PRISMA guidelines. Searches were performed in PubMed, CINAHL, Cochrane, ClinicalKey/Elsevier, ScienceDirect, and Ulakbim databases between April 1 and December 31, 2021, using keywords "COVID-19, abuse, physical abuse, child, child abuse" and their Turkish equivalents. The search, limited to 2020-2021, focused on descriptive, cross-sectional, retrospective, and prevalence studies. Of 1817 studies initially identified, 10 were included after removing duplicates and applying eligibility criteria.
Findings: Studies indicate that social isolation, economic hardships, job losses, parental psychological issues, and increased stress during the pandemic heightened the risk of physical child abuse. Behaviors such as hitting, shaking, pushing, slapping, and choking increased significantly. Reporting rates varied by country, with some showing increases and others decreases due to pandemic challenges.
Conclusion: Cases of physical child abuse have increased during the pandemic, but reporting has decreased due to school closures and limited access to healthcare. Strengthening physical child abuse screening and intervention protocols by nurses in healthcare facilities, systematizing case detection, early referral, and preventive education efforts are critical to protecting children's safety during pandemics and similar crises.
Keywords: Abuse, child, child abuse, COVID-19, nurse, physical abuse.

COVID-19 Döneminde Fiziksel Çocuk İstismarına Bakış: Sistematik Bir İnceleme

ÖZET

Amaç: Bu sistematik derlemenin amacı, COVID-19 salgını süresince fiziksel çocuk istismarı vakalarının sıklığı, risk faktörleri, istismar türlerinin yanı sıra hemşirelerin erken tespit, önleme ve müdahale rollerini incelemektir.
Gereç ve Yöntem: Derleme, PRISMA yönergelerine uygun olarak yürütülmüştür. 1 Nisan – 31 Aralık 2021 tarihleri arasında PubMed, CINAHL, Cochrane, ClinicalKey/Elsevier, ScienceDirect ve Ulakbim veri tabanlarında, "COVID-19, abuse, physical abuse, child, child abuse" ve bu terimlerin Türkçe karşılıkları kullanılarak taramalar yapılmıştır. 2020-2021 yıllarıyla sınırlı tutulan arama; tanımlayıcı, kesitsel, retrospektif ve prevalans çalışmalarına odaklanmıştır. Başlangıçta belirlenen 1817 çalışmadan, tekrarlar ve uygunluk kriterlerine göre eleme yapıldıktan sonra 10 çalışma derlemeye dahil edilmiştir.
Bulgular: Çalışmalar, pandemi sürecinde sosyal izolasyon, ekonomik zorluklar, iş kayıpları, ebeveynlerdeki psikolojik sorunlar ve artan stresin fiziksel çocuk istismarı riskini artırdığını göstermektedir. Vurma, sarsma, itme, tokat atma ve boğma gibi davranışlarda anlamlı artış gözlemlenmiştir. Vakaların bildirilme oranları ülkelere göre farklılık göstermiş; bazı ülkelerde artış yaşanırken, bazılarında ise pandemi koşulları nedeniyle azalma olmuştur.
Sonuç: Fiziksel çocuk istismarı vakaları pandemi sırasında artmıştır, ancak okulların kapanması ve sağlık hizmetlerine erişimin sınırlı olması nedeniyle bildirimler azalmıştır. Sağlık kuruluşlarında hemşirelerin fiziksel çocuk istismarı tarama ve müdahale protokollerini güçlendirmeleri; vaka tespiti, erken yönlendirme ve koruyucu eğitim çalışmalarını sistematik hale getirmeleri, pandemi ve benzeri kriz dönemlerinde çocukların güvenliğini korumada kritik öneme sahiptir.
Anahtar Kelimeler: İstismar, çocuk, çocuk istismarı, COVID-19, hemşire, fiziksel istismar.

1. Introduction

Violence within the family is classified as physical, psychological and sexual abuse (incest) according to the way it is practiced (1). It has been proven in many studies that children's exposure to domestic violence causes psychological, emotional, behavioral, cognitive, social and academic problems (2-5). More than 1 billion children (aged 2-17) are exposed to physical, emotional and sexual violence every year. Approximately 4/10 of adults have experienced maltreatment in their childhood (6, 7). The consequences of child maltreatment on society are also severe. It is reported that individuals who have been exposed to maltreatment in childhood have lower levels of education and financial income in adulthood and are more likely to be involved in crime (3, 8).

COVID-19 measures have affected both the frequency and level of violence experienced and the reporting of violence incidents. The rapid spread of the COVID-19 virus from the moment it emerged and the fact that it has affected the whole world has brought along obligations such as quarantine, isolation and social distancing. These practices are necessary to control the virus (9). However, the uncertainty, fear, stress, economic

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Corresponding Author
Büşra İnaç Yılmaz, Istanbul University-Cerrahpaşa Institute of Graduate Studies, Istanbul, Türkiye.
E-mail: busrainac26@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0003-0539-8559
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worries, and economic worries caused by the pandemic in society and the household spending time together for a long time caused an increase in domestic violence and difficulties in recognizing children in the early period. The closure of schools has also made it difficult to reach children's help through schools (10).

In the COVID-19 pandemic, studies reported from around the world show the seriousness of the situation, with domestic violence leading to a secondary crisis. According to a United Nations report in 2020, 243 million women and children have experienced domestic violence in the last 12 months (11). In China, where the COVID-19 virus emerged and was the first country to implement social restraining orders, domestic violence is reported to have tripled (12, 13). France reported a 32-36% increase in domestic abuse complaints following the implementation of restrictions and lockdown measures (12).

Following the restrictions imposed to prevent the pandemic, there has been an increase in domestic violence hotline and emergency calls in countries such as Cyprus, Singapore and Argentina (14, 15). In addition, reports of domestic violence have increased in many countries, especially in the USA, Germany, Canada and Spain (16-19). In India, a government-run child helpline received more than 92,000 calls in the first 11 days of the lockdown measures in the country. Similarly in Turkey, the report prepared by the Presidency of the Police Academy states that domestic violence increased during the pandemic (20).

According to the Brazilian Ministry of Women, Family and Human Rights, the number of reports of violence against children dropped by 12% during the pandemic (21). Registrations to child helplines have shown similar results in some US states. In September 2020, a report on child abuse in the USA reported that child abuse cases decreased by 51% and that reports did not reflect the truth (22). In a study by Marques et al. (2020), it was reported that child helplines have reduced staff and limited child protection services due to the introduction of curfews and reduced funding, especially in low- and middle-income countries. With child helplines, it is predicted that cases of child abuse may go unnoticed or underreported (21). Furthermore, the COVID-19 crisis has increased the stress that families were already facing before the pandemic, and the combination of record unemployment, unprecedented food insecurity, and family members forced to spend more time together than ever before is likely to increase child maltreatment (22, 23). In Australia, when stay-at-home orders were introduced, police in some parts of the country reported a 40% drop in crime overall, but a 5% increase in domestic abuse calls (12). Australia also reported a 75% increase in internet searches for domestic abuse support. Since the introduction of social restrictions and lockdown measures, reports of domestic relationship problems, abuse and violence have increased worldwide (12, 13, 24, 25).

Schools are known to be the most reliable sources for reporting child abuse. Teachers, guidance counselors, school psychologists and school nurses are the primary sources for reporting child maltreatment (8). In the US, it was reported that more than 20% of the roughly 4.3 million cases nationwide in 2018 were reported by school staff. This facilitated the work of law enforcement, health professionals and social service personnel (26). However, the closure of schools due to the pandemic limits the reporting of child abuse cases (26). Apart from reports from schools, various official and unofficial sources play an important role in reporting child abuse during the pandemic. For example, the online news media USA Today reported that children were not safe at home during the COVID-19 pandemic, with more children affected by abuse being hospitalized (27). The Washington Post claimed that child maltreatment cases have intensified since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, with 31% more calls to the National Child Abuse Hotline in the US during March 2020 than in March 2019 (28). The Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN) reported a 22% monthly increase in allegations of abuse of children under the age of 18 during the lockdown period, with 67% of children having a family member as the perpetrator (29). Nurses, especially those working in pediatrics, emergency services, and community health, play a critical role in recognizing early signs of child abuse. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, their ability to fulfill this role has been limited due to reduced contact with children and overwhelmed healthcare systems. It is therefore essential to understand not only the trends in child abuse but also how nursing practices can adapt to better detect and respond to such cases (11, 22).

The face of the COVID-19 pandemic period reflected on children is seen as neglect and abuse. In light of this information, this systematic review was carried out to determine scientific, objective and evidence-based (30) physical abuse incidents related to child abuse.

1.1. Aim

In this systematic review, according to the PICOS method (30), the results of descriptive, cross-sectional (prevalence), retrospective and prevalence studies on the increase in child abuse cases during the COVID-19 period and the measures that can be taken were examined.

1.2. Research Questions

Has there been an increase in cases of physical abuse against children during COVID-19?
Has there been a change in the frequency of reporting physical abuse during COVID-19?
What are the factors leading to an increase in physical abuse of children during COVID-19?
What are the physical abuse behaviors applied to children during COVID-19?
Have reports of physical abuse differed by country during COVID-19?
Which age groups of children were more affected by physical abuse in COVID-19?

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Research Design

(P)Population: participants: children (I)Intervention: intervention: physical abuse behaviors (C)Comparison: comparison: comparison to previous years; (O)Outcomes: outcomes: increase in abuse cases since COVID-19; (S)Study design: descriptive, cross-sectional, retrospective and prevalence steps were considered. In the review, a date limitation was made and narrowed to 2020-2021 covering the COVID-19 period and the search was conducted between April 1 and December 31, 2021 using the keywords " COVID-19, abuse, physical abuse, child, child abuse" in Turkish and " COVID-19, abuse, physical abuse, child, child abuse" in English.

2.2. Databases Used in the Research

We used 6 electronic databases including PUBMED, CINAHL, Cochrane, Clinical Key/Elsevier, Science Direct and Ulakbim.

The inclusion criteria for this systematic review were access to the full text of the study, study years 2020-2021, appropriateness of keywords in the title and abstract, English or Turkish language, descriptive, cross-sectional, retrospective and prevalence studies on the subject.

2.3. Evaluation of Data

A systematic literature review was conducted in six electronic databases.

A total of 1817 studies conducted between 2020-2021 were systematized in line with PRISMA standards. After excluding 449 repeated studies, the remaining 883 studies were included in the scope of the review according to the title, abstract and full-text availability. A total of 864 articles were excluded, including 847 reviews and 17 articles using different research methods such as qualitative studies, case studies, mixed methods research, meta-analyses and systematic review, of which only the title and abstract could be reached and the full text could not be reached. Six descriptive, cross-sectional, retrospective and non-prevalence studies that were compatible with the inclusion criteria were excluded. Of the remaining articles, a total of 10 studies that met the inclusion criteria and examined physical abuse in children during COVID-19 were included in the systematic review (Figure 1, Appendix 1).

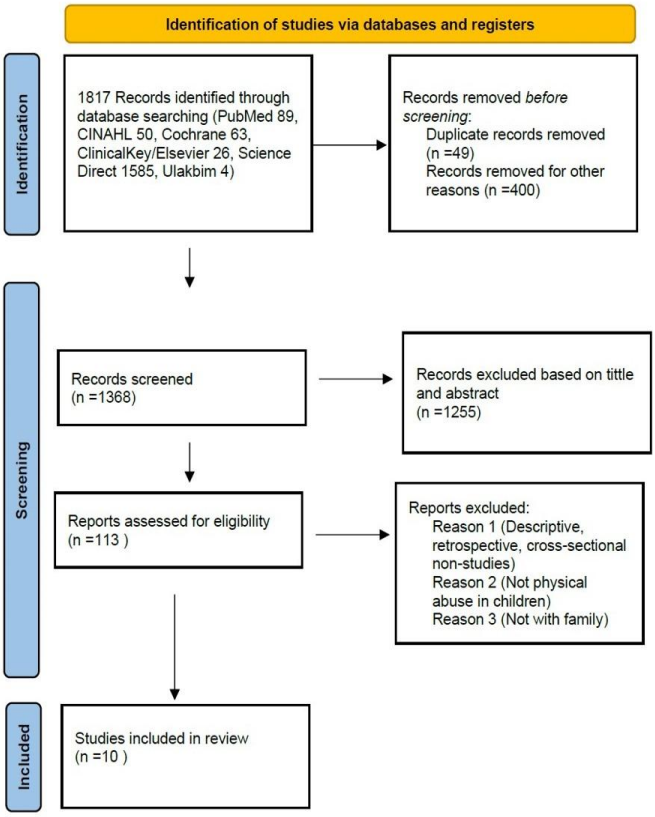


Figure 1. Flow Chart of Screening and Selection of Studies

2.4. Ethical Aspects of the Research

There is no risk of any material / moral damage to the researchers in conducting the literature review. The articles examined within the scope of the study are shown in the bibliography.

3. Results

In the systematic review conducted in line with PRISMA standards, 10 articles obtained from PUBMED, CINAHL, Cochrane, Clinical Key/Elsevier, Science Direct and Ulakbim electronic databases consisted of descriptive, cross-sectional, retrospective and prevalence studies examining the effect of COVID-19 on physical abuse in children between 2020-2021 (Table 1). Seven of the studies included in the systematic review were descriptive (4, 31-37), one cross-sectional (34), one retrospective (38), and one prevalence (39). The studies were conducted in Japan (31), the United States (32, 33, 4), Hong Kong (34), Egypt (35), the Netherlands (38), Singapore (36), Canada (37) and Germany (39).

3.1. Sample Group Characteristics in the Analyzed Studies

The sample groups of the studies consisted of parents with children younger than 18 years of age. In the study, the exposure of children to physical abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic was examined. All of the studies (4, 31-39) were conducted as online surveys. In the questionnaire, parental behaviors, use of the discipline (33, 34, 38, 39), use of physical punishment (35, 34, 38), child maltreatment (4, 33-35), parent-child relationship status (4, 36), meeting the needs of children (37), risk factors related to the pandemic (32, 39), abusive behaviors developed in parents during the pandemic process (31, 34).

3.2. Prevalence and Patterns of Physical Child Abuse During COVID-19

The findings revealed a significant increase in physical child abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the study conducted by AboKresha et al (2021) researchers found that 90.5% of children were exposed to violent discipline (35). Similarly, Ono and Honda (2017), Rodriguez et al (2018), Tucker and Rodriguez (2014) reported that social isolation and lack of social support are risk factors for child maltreatment (40-42).

3.3. Parental Disciplinary Behaviors

Several studies examined specific parental disciplinary behaviors that constituted physical abuse. Lee et al (2022) found that the pandemic was associated with a 275% increase in the likelihood of spanking or slapping children. An increase in perceived social isolation by parents was associated with a 55% increase in the likelihood of using discipline. Parents were found to have a 77% increase in the likelihood of yelling at their children more often than usual, a 92% increase in the likelihood of conflict, a 132% increase in the likelihood of leaving them alone, and a 124% increase in the likelihood of hitting or spanking children more often than usual (33).

In studies, it has been determined that physical abuse against children includes behaviors such as hitting, shaking, pushing, slapping, kicking, strangling, hitting with an object, pinching, pulling the ear, pulling the hair, and pinching (4, 31, 33, 35, 36, 38).

3.4. Parent-Child Relationship and Communication

The quality of parent- child relationships showed significant deterioration during the pandemic. The study by Chung (2020) in Singapore found that decreased positive parent-child interactions were significantly correlated with increased physical discipline ($p<0.001$) (36). Wong et al (2021) investigated the impact of COVID-19 on child maltreatment and found that reduced income, job loss and exposure to partner violence were associated with severe or very severe physical assaults against children (34).

3.5. Risk Factors Associated with Physical Child Abuse

Multiple risk factors for increased physical child abuse were identified across studies. Financial stress was consistently associated with higher rates of physical abuse, with Ono and Honda (2017), Rodriguez et al (2018), Tucker and Rodriguez (2014) reporting that social isolation and lack of social support are risk factors for child maltreatment (40-42). Parental mental health issues were another significant factor, with Lawson et al. (2020) finding that parental depression and anxiety were strongly associated with increased physical abuse (4, 39). The

German study by Ebert et al. (2021) identified that home quarantine increased the risk of intrapersonal conflict (39).

3.6. Impact of Pandemic-Related Stressors

Pandemic-specific stressors significantly influenced physical abuse rates. For parents, working from home, job loss, and decreased social support; for children, school closures and the family and child being in the same house all day have increased the likelihood of using physical punishment (4, 32-34, 36, 38).

4. Discussion

Studies on the incidence of physical abuse cases in children during the COVID-19 pandemic period were examined. It is seen that the reasons that prompted the researchers to work were that the pandemic changed the lives of children and parents and increased concerns about child maltreatment (4, 31-39). The findings from these studies clearly indicate a significant increase in physical child abuse rates during the pandemic compared to pre-pandemic levels. For instance, Lee et al. (2022) reported a 275% increase in the likelihood of spanking or slapping children, while Brown et al. (2020) documented a 19.5% increase in physical punishment compared to pre-pandemic baseline measurements (32, 33). AboKresha et al. (2021) stated in a study conducted in Egypt that 90.5% of children were exposed to violent discipline (35). This substantial increase in physical disciplinary behaviors appears to be directly linked to pandemic-related stressors that have fundamentally altered family dynamics.

When comparing these findings with pre-pandemic research, several important patterns emerge. Prior to COVID-19, studies by Cuartas et al. (2019) (43), Fréchette (2017) (44) and Lansford et al. (2017) (45) reported physical discipline rates of approximately 15-20% among general parent populations, significantly lower than the 40-90% rates observed during pandemic lockdowns as reported by AboKresha et al. (2021) (35). Furthermore, while pre-pandemic research by Schneider et al (2016) identified financial stress and mental health issues as contributing factors to physical abuse, our review indicates that these risk factors were substantially amplified during the pandemic, with stronger associations between economic hardship and abusive behaviors as documented by van Lawson et al (2020) (4). Pre-pandemic research shows that domestic violence, child maltreatment and interpersonal violence increase after natural disasters (46-48) and economic recessions (49). There are also studies showing that social isolation and lack of social support are risk factors for child maltreatment (4, 31, 33-35). Studies show that pandemic-induced job loss poses a significant risk for child neglect and abuse, and protective factors such as coping with this situation and reframing within the family can reduce the risk of child maltreatment (4, 32-34, 36, 38). Regarding physical abuse, there was a significant interaction between coping with job loss and reframing, with a reduced likelihood of physical abuse (4, 32).

It was concluded that COVID-19 conditions, combined with a high degree of economic uncertainty during the pandemic and decreased social support, increased parenting stress (36). Chung et al (2020) concluded that the perceived impact of COVID-19 increases harsh behavior in parenting and reduces parent-child relationship and that it is important to support parents and reduce the impact of COVID-19, as this will create a risk factor for potential child abuse (36).

Wong et al (2021) investigated the impact of COVID-19 on child maltreatment and found that reduced income, job loss and exposure to partner violence were associated with severe or very severe physical assaults against children. Parents who experienced a significant income decline or job loss related to COVID-19 were approximately 2-3 times more likely to physically mistreat their children during the pandemic compared to parents with no change in employment or increased income. It can be concluded that if there are inappropriate parenting behaviors, the length of time parents stay at home may also increase the risk of physical assault, and measures should be taken to protect children (34).

Parents who have lost their jobs appear to be more depressed, and parents who were previously psychologically mistreated are more likely to mistreat their children during the pandemic (4, 32). Lee et al. (2022) found that experiencing a change in employment status due to the pandemic was associated with a 275% increase in the likelihood of spanking or slapping children. It was concluded that an increase in parents' perceived social isolation was associated with a 55% increase in the likelihood of using discipline. It was found that there was a 77% increase in parents yelling at their children more often than usual, a 92% increase in the likelihood of experiencing conflict, a 132% increase in the likelihood of leaving them alone, and a 124% increase in the likelihood of spanking or hitting children more often than usual (33).

In studies, it has been determined that physical abuse against children includes behaviors such as hitting, shaking, pushing, slapping, kicking, strangling, hitting with an object, pinching, pulling the ear, pulling the hair, and pinching (4, 31, 33, 35, 36, 38). Lee et al (2022) stated that corporal punishment was common during the pandemic period and that one out of every five parents hit their children only in the last 2 weeks, and that parents used corporal punishment more frequently during the pandemic (33).

AboKresha et al (2021) found that 90.5% of children were exposed to violent discipline (35). This is much higher than the results of a UNICEF study conducted in 2014, which found that 68.5% of the children studied were exposed to violent discipline, despite the significantly shorter reporting period (2 weeks) compared to the UNICEF report (3 months) (50). The results of this study were also higher than the results of a meta-analysis of reports on the past-year prevalence of violence against children from 38 countries from 96 countries, which showed that at least 50% or more of children in Asia, Africa and North America had experienced past-year violence (7).

In studies comparing the pandemic time with previous years, it was observed that children had a history of more physical abuse during the pandemic (4, 38). In the study of Sari et al (2021) comparing harsh parenting before the pandemic with the time of the pandemic, they found that harsh parenting levels increased significantly during the pandemic. In addition, it was concluded that harsh discipline scores increased in parents during the COVID-19 lockdown, which meant that more parents often used harsh physical responses to discipline their children. These parental behaviors can be considered physical and emotional abuse and may have long-term negative consequences for children's development (38).

It is worrying that rates of violence have increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. Post-pandemic research has shown that the rate of violent discipline increased during the pandemic in many countries. Examining data from child hotlines in the first 6 months of 2020, Petrowski et al (2020) showed that the number of contacts with hotlines in the US has increased substantially since the beginning of the pandemic. When the countries included in the review were analyzed, it was concluded that cases of physical abuse increased in Hong Kong Egypt, the Netherlands, Singapore, Canada and Germany; decreased in Japan; and increased in one study and decreased in one study in the USA. It was found that there was no difference between the

level of development of the countries and the cases of physical abuse of children by families. Critical public health policies aimed at protecting the public from the spread of COVID-19, such as interruption of face-to-face education, social distancing and on-site housing, have left many children vulnerable to maltreatment and have also affected the reporting of neglect and abuse cases (3, 51, 52).

B´erub´e et al (2020) reported that when parents of young children (0-5 years) were compared with parents of older children (6-17 years), they met their children's needs less in three areas measured as cognitive and emotional, safety and basic care needs. In a retrospective study, Sari et al (2021) compared a sample of parents (n = 1,030) with children aged 1-10 years (mean age = 36 months) before the pandemic with 3-year-old children of parents (n = 206) during the pandemic period. This sample was chosen because toddlers and younger children are more likely to be abused. When faced with a crisis, children's developmental pathways should not be sacrificed, children's needs should be placed at the highest level and children should be protected against neglect and abuse (37-39).

The American Academy of Pediatrics, Japan Pediatric Society, and World Health Organization recommend behaviors to support children during the pandemic period, such as empathizing with the child's emotions without denying them, allowing the child to play to express their emotions, explaining the situation related to COVID-19 to the child in simple words to support the child about the pandemic, and avoiding overexposing the child to news and media about COVID-19 (53-56).

Studies have identified the urgent need for pandemic-resilient support strategies such as help centers for parents and children during COVID-19 or measures to reduce the burden of care (36, 38).

The findings of this review underscore the urgent need for capacity building among nurses regarding child protection. Training programs aimed at recognizing abuse signs, using screening tools, and establishing interdisciplinary reporting protocols should be integrated into both hospital and community nursing practice. Furthermore, telehealth opportunities can be leveraged by nurses to maintain regular check-ins with at-risk families during periods of restricted physical access (11, 22, 37, 50, 54).

5.Conclusion and Recommendations

Social restriction to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus increases the risk of domestic violence and leads to neglect and abuse of children. When combined with risk factors such as economics, childcare, high levels of stress due to difficulties in accessing resources, previous history of violence, poverty, poor self-control and dominance of a family member, children are the most at-risk group for experiencing violence. In this systematic review, children who were physically abused during the COVID-19 period were evaluated with data from parents. During the COVID-19 period, there was an increase in the number of online or telephone reports of physical abuse. It was determined that physical abuse behaviors applied to children include hitting, shaking, pushing, slapping, kicking, strangling, hitting with an object, pinching, pulling the ear, pulling the hair, pinching, spanking or slapping. It was determined that there was no difference between the level of development of the countries and the practice of physical abuse and that the age group most affected by physical abuse was the young age group (0-5 years). Nurses working with children have important roles in identifying, preventing and addressing neglect and abuse problems and communicating with the necessary authorities. Strengthening the integration of child abuse recognition modules in nursing education and institutionalizing pandemic-adaptive nurse-led intervention programs will be essential in future public health emergencies. During the pandemic, it is important to raise awareness among nurses in abuse screening, detection and prevention of abuse, which is not optimal due to limited health services, and to eliminate the problem. This systematic review is thought to contribute to the awareness of nurses. As a result of the systematic review, it was observed that the incidence of physical abuse in children increased due to the increase in staying at home during the pandemic period, but was underreported. The limitations of the studies on the subject are the small number of studies, the presence of foreign studies, and the lack of studies from our country. Studies should be increased and solutions should be proposed.

6. Contribution to the Field

In line with all this information, nurses should contribute to the determination of abuse incidents, conduct clinical and field research, and obtaining objective results in studies.

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Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest with any person and/or institution.

Authorship Contribution

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Appendix 1. *Studies Included in the Systematic Review*

Title of the Study/Authors	Research Method	Sample	Unit where it is made	Implemented Intervention	Conclusion
"Abusive and positive parenting behavior in Japan during the COVID-19 pandemic under the state of emergency" Yamaoka et al., 2021	Descriptive	5344 parents living in Japan with children aged 0-17 years	Online survey	The prevalence of abusive parenting behaviour during the COVID-19 pandemic; physical, psychological and social factors and its relationship with positive parenting behaviour were examined.	While 1/5 of parents reported abusive behaviours, more than 80% reported positive parenting behaviours.
"Stress and parenting during the global COVID-19 pandemic" Brown et al., 2020	Descriptive	183 parents with children under 18 in the western United States	Online survey	The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic were examined in relation to the stress perceived by parents and the potential for child abuse.	It was concluded that greater parental support and control over children during the pandemic was associated with less stress and potential for child abuse.
"Parental social isolation and child maltreatment risk during the COVID-19 pandemic" Lee et al., 2022	Descriptive	283 parents living in the USA with at least one child aged 0-12 years	Online survey	The association of parents' perceived social isolation and recent loss of employment with the risk of child maltreatment (neglect, verbal aggression and corporal punishment) was examined.	Social isolation and job loss led parents to use discipline (such as corporal punishment and spanking) more frequently.
"Impact of COVID-19 on child maltreatment: Income instability and parenting issues" Wong et al., 2021	Cross-sectional	600 parents with children under the age of 10 living in Hong Kong	Online survey	It was investigated whether parental job loss and reduced income affect child maltreatment.	Income instability, such as reduced income and job loss, was found to increase the risk of severe and very severe physical assault against children.
"Impact of COVID-19 pandemic and related isolation measures on violence against children in Egypt" AboKresha, Abdelkreem and Ali., 2021	Descriptive	1118 parents in Egypt with children under 18	Online survey	The magnitude, pattern and risk factors of violence against children during the period of isolation measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic and its relationship with parents' psychological stress were analysed.	It was concluded that 90.5% of children were exposed to severe discipline, 88.7% experienced psychological aggression and 43.2% experienced severe corporal punishment; about 60% of parents were moderately or severely psychologically affected.
"Higher levels of harsh parenting during the COVID-19 lockdown in the Netherlands" Sari et al., 2021	Case-control (retrospective)	1156 parents in the Netherlands with children aged 1-10 years (A sample of parents collected before the pandemic (n = 1.030) was compared with 3-year-old children of parents during the pandemic (n = 206).	Online survey	It was assessed whether parents with young children (n = 206) used harsh discipline more often during the lockdown in the Netherlands compared to the sample of parents collected before the pandemic (n = 1.030).	It was concluded that the levels of harsh behaviour in parenting (such as shaking, name-calling and calling the child stupid) increased significantly compared to the pre-pandemic period.
"Mediating Effects of Parental Stress on Harsh Parenting and Parent-Child Relationship during Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic in Singapore" Chung, Lainer and Wong, 2020	Descriptive	258 parents with children older than 12 years living in Singapore	Online survey	It was examined how parents' perceived impact of parenting stress COVID-19 increased harsh parenting and decreased parent-child relationship closeness.	It was concluded that the impact of COVID-19 and stay-at-home orders can increase parenting stress, which in turn increases the use of harsh parenting by affecting parents' relationships with their children and has a negative impact on parenting.
"How societal responses to COVİD-19 could contribute to child neglect" Berube et al., 2020	Descriptive	Quebec, Canada 414 parents in the state	Online survey	Parents' reports of their children's responses to their needs during the COVID-19 crisis were analysed.	Compared to parents of younger children, parents of older children reported that they met their children's needs less, including cognitive, emotional, safety and basic care needs.
"Prevalence and risk factors of violence against women and children during COVID-19, Germany" Ebert and Steinert., 2021	Prevelance	3818 women aged 18-65 living in Germany	Online survey	The prevalence and exacerbating factors of violence against women and children in Germany during the COVID pandemic were examined.	Out of 3818 people, 118 reported physical conflict cases, 293 reported emotional abuse, and 97 out of 1474 participants with children reported using corporal punishment on children.
"Child Maltreatment during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Consequences of Parental Job Loss on Psychological and Physical Abuse Towards Children" Lawson, Piel and Simon, 2020	Descriptive	342 parents with children aged 4-10 living in the USA	Online survey	The relationship between parental job loss and child maltreatment during the COVID-19 pandemic was examined.	It was concluded that parents who lost their jobs during the pandemic were more depressed and had previously psychologically maltreated their children; among parents who lost their jobs, the likelihood of physical abuse decreased as reframing, coping increased.