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Health problems orphan children and nursing approaches

Sumeyye Yıldız, Naime Altay and Ebru Kilicarslan-Toruner
Gazi University, Turkey

Introduction: Family structure may change because of poverty, immigrations, divorces, parents' death and physical and emotional problems. Legal responsibility related with the care of child cannot be fulfilled properly according to the change in family structure and uncertainties and inabilities may arise in the care of child. Emergence of uncertainties and inabilities in the care could cause the child became an orphan.

Aim: The aim of study was to review the physical and emotional health problems of orphan children and nursing approaches in the literature.

Methods: In this review research, studies especially conducted in the recent ten years were reviewed by using the keywords "orphan" "children", "physical problem", psychosocial problem", "health" "nurse" on E-Library, Clinical Key, Pubmed, Medline, SAGE Journals databases and web sites of UNICEF and WHO. Statistics, definitions, books, and full-text articles were searched for the research.

Findings: It was determined that orphan children experience various physical, mental, emotional and social problems due to deficiencies in child's care, development, protection and follow-up. In the literature, it was determined that adolescent pregnancies, adolescent parenting, sexually transmitted diseases, dental health problems are the most seen physical problems seen in orphan children. Mental development retardation, cognitive inefficiency and language disorder are the mental problems that could be seen in these children. Emotional and behavioral problems such as low-esteem perception, aggressiveness, depression, hyperactivity were stated within psychosocial problems in orphans. Also, it was determined that exposure to physical and sexual abuse and becoming homeless are seen in orphan children. It was established that rates of using tobacco, alcohol and illegal substance abuse are high in these adolescents. Personal development delay was found in children who interact with inadequate role models. Lack of confidence, being pessimistic about future, peer rejection, deterioration in family structure and low self-esteem perception was determined as social problems experienced by children. It was stated that orphan children experience social isolation, compliance problem with peers, low academic achievements, anti-social behaviors and are more defenseless to the life in adulthood period. It was found that placing these children into a family rather than institution care affects the physical and mental health of children positively. It is important for the nurses to take protective measures for potential risks and to decrease the number of child in high risk group within the community. Nurses should assess the physical and psychological health status regularly, determine the existing problems early and provide consultancy and education for the children who are in high risk group.

Conclusion: Many physical and psychosocial problems are seen in orphan children. These problems may influence future health conditions and life of children. For this reason, problems experienced should be identified in early period and measures should be taken. Nurses have essential roles in promotion of health of community and children. Nurses should participate into decisions at legal and political level, organize programs for the community and children.

Biography

Sumeyye Yıldız completed Nursing Bachelor Programme in Omer Halisdemir University Zubeyde Hanim School of Health in 2014. He is pursuing Master's in Gazi University Health Sciences Faculty in Pediatric Nursing field since 2016. She has started to work as a Research Assistant in Kahramanmaraş Sutcu Imam University Health School in Pediatric Nursing field since 2016. Then she has been working in Gazi University Health Sciences Faculty in Pediatric Nursing field as a Research Assistant since 2016.

sumeyye.yildiz1@gazi.edu.tr