

[Korea]

## Child Abuse in Korea


Hyun-Young Deborah SHIN\*<sup>1</sup>

Since South Korea ratified the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991, Korean government has enacted laws to protect children from all kinds of abuse. However, recently child abuse has been becoming an important social issue nation-wide after a series of physical and sexual abuse incidents became known. Still, there is controversy over the definition of child abuse, given the differences between eastern and western culture.

The current statistics in 2012 showed that a total of 8,979 cases of child abuse were reported last year. Eighty-seven percent of child abuse occurred in the home, 84% of abusers were the child’s parents, and 41% happened every day. Multiple abuses accounted for 47%, followed by negligence (27%), emotional abuse (15%), physical abuse (7%) and sexual abuse (4%). The reports of child abuse have been increasing every year. Some causes are thought to be a rise in weak family structures resulting from divorce, remarriage, and poverty-stricken households.


Because there are still a lot of cases that are

hidden, there should be more effort put forth in getting better results regarding prevention, early detection, and in setting up well-managed reporting systems of child abuse. First, citizens and the community should all pay attention to neglected children and report abuse in their neighborhoods. This can be done through an educational campaign. Second, inadequate reporting systems should be revised by setting up a mandatory section on EMR so that all doctors can record suspicious cases which will then be reported to the child protective center automatically. Third, the legal limits in restricting parental rights and the monitoring system of high-risk families should be strengthened. Lastly, there must be more facilities to provide care and shelter for the victims. With the enactment of these initiatives society overall can be made better. This will result in the protection of children, and their rights as human beings, against all forms of violence. It is the most important investment we can make for the upcoming generations, and the future of all throughout the world.



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in Korea**

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### Overview

- Case Reports
- The Statistics
- Current System
- Efforts and Activities
- Changes

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## Case Reports



### Case 1: Physical Abuse to Death

- In 2011, a father beat his three-year-old son to death and dumped the body in a garbage site
- The neighbors said they heard the boy crying almost every day because of the father's violence.
- If they had reported it to the police, the boy may not have died.

Awareness

### Case 2: Sexual Violence



- In 2005 an 11-year-old girl was murdered.
- The man murdered the girl after he attempted to rape her but failed.
- The man had previously served time in prison for sexual molestation

Recurrence

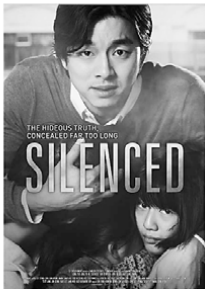
### Case 3: Sexual Violence



- In 2008 a man choked and raped an 8-year-old girl
- The rape was so severe that the victim's internal organs were exposed externally

Prevention

### Case 4: Child Abuse on Disabled Children



- In 2005 a large scale system of **sexual, physical and mental abuse** was discovered at a school for students with hearing impairment
- Based on a true story, the movie "Silenced" shed new light on the case

Dogani Law

### Why is child abuse prevention important?



- **Human Beings**
- **Violence Cycle**
- **Huge Economical Impacts**

*Economic Impact Study (September 2007)*

Prevent Child Abuse America  
Chicago, Illinois

**Total Estimated Cost of Child Abuse and Neglect in the United States**  
Ching-Tung Wang, Ph.D. and John Holton, Ph.D.

<b>Total Annual Direct Cost</b>	\$33,101,302,133	Hospitalization Mental health care Child welfare service Law enforcement
<b>Total Annual Indirect Cost</b>	\$70,652,715,359	Special education Lost productivity to society Mental health and Health care Juvenile delinquency Adult criminal justice system
<b>Total Cost</b>	\$103,754,017,482	

## The Statistics Child Abuse in Korea



### Child abuse increases (Unit: cases)

Child abuse cases increased by 7.9 percent on-year in 2012, with more than 80 percent committed by parents at home, according to a survey by the Ministry of Health and Welfare.

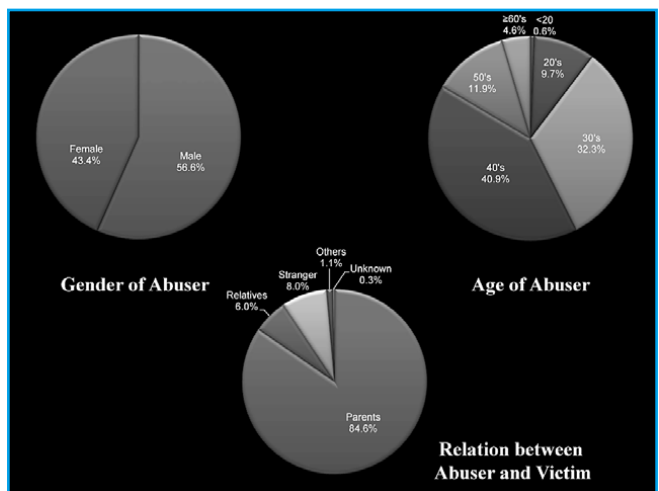
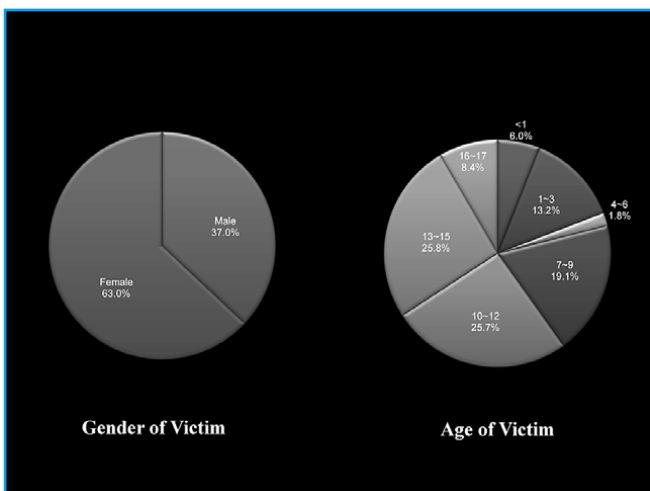
Year	Cases
2008	5,578
2009	5,685
2010	5,657
2011	6,058
2012	6,403

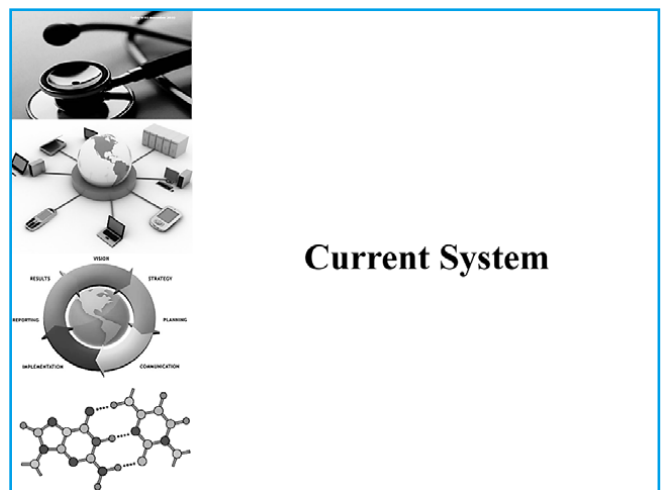
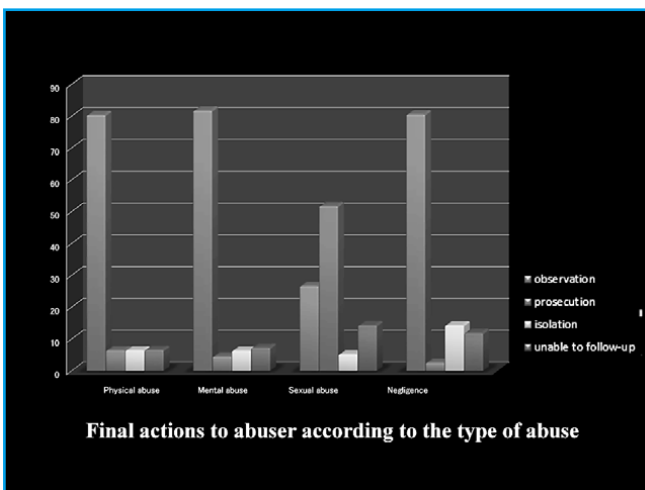
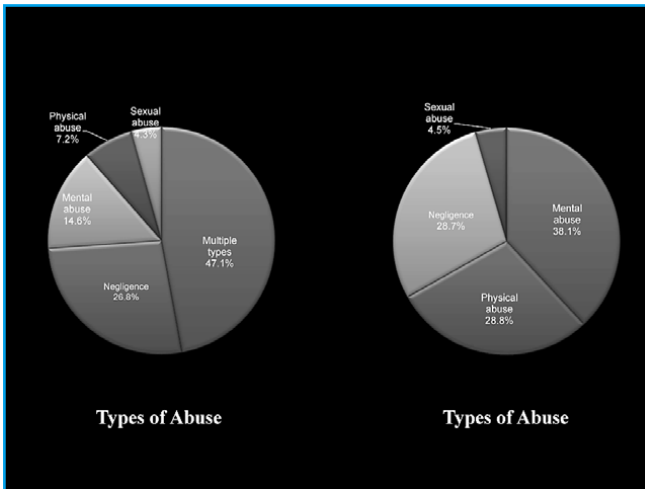
Place of abuse: Home: 87%  
Offenders: Parents: 83.8%

Source: Ministry of Health and Welfare  
Graphic by Nam Kyung-don

Rise in

- weak family structures
- poverty-stricken households





## History





- 1981 Korean Child Welfare Act
- 1989 Korea Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect
- 1991 Ratification of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
- 1998 Child Abuse Neglect Prevention Act
- 2000 The first Revision of Korean Child Welfare Act
- 2011 The second Revision of Korean Child Welfare Act
- 2013 Expansion of Child protection centers in Korea : 17 centers in 2000 → 47 centers in 2013


## Nationwide Reporting System

**1577-1391**  
24 hour Hotline in the Child Protection Agency

Call 129 (without regional code) wherever you are in the country. Everywhere you can just press no.129. You can receive the information and consultation service related to health and welfare if you call 129 without the regional code which charges you only the local phone fee.



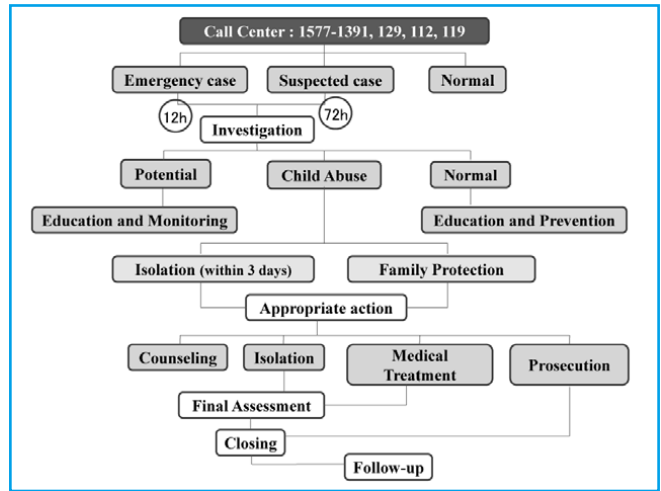





## Organizations




<b>Public</b>	Ministry of Health and Welfare National Child Protection Agency (NCPA) Local Child Protection Agency Ministry of Gender equality and Family Sunflower child protection center for sexual abuse
<b>Private</b>	One-stop supporting center Korea Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Good neighbors (research center of child abuse) ChildFund Korea (Group Homes)



## Efforts and Activities





### Prevention Day of Child Abuse



### Korea Children Assembly



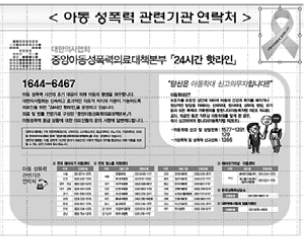

## KMA's efforts

Manuals for child abuse and sexual abuse

- Cooperation with child protection agency since 2003
- Hospital-based child protection team
- Guidelines and Manuals

## KMA's efforts

- 24 hour hotline call center
- Training for the experts
- Collaboration with Korean Bar Association for amendment of law

## The Changes



## Case 1: Physical Abuse to Death

- In 2011, a father beat his three-year-old son to death and dumped the body in a garbage site
- The neighbors said they heard the boy crying almost every day because of the father's violence.
- If they had reported it to the police, the boy may not have died.

Awareness

## Campaigns



## Case 2 & 3: Sexual Violence of students

- In 2005 an 11-year-old girl was murdered.
- The man murdered the girl after he attempted to rape her but failed.
- The man had previously served time in prison for sexual molestation

Recurrence

- In 2008 a man choked and raped an 8-year-old girl
- The rape was so severe that the victim's internal organs were exposed externally

Prevention

- Currently the law requires brutal sex offenders to wear a **GPS enabled electronic anklet** and the disclosing of **personal criminal information**.

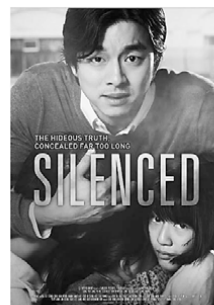


Electronic anklet with GPS

<http://www.sexoffender.go.kr/>

## “Dogani Law”

: Called “The Crucible” in English



The National Assembly passed “Dogani Law”

- Prison terms for those raping the disabled or young children will increase, up to **life imprisonment**
- All teachers and doctors with a history of sexual assault are **restricted from working in their profession for 10 years**

**But still...**



### Social-Cultural barriers

Traditional thoughts

- Confucianism
- Familism and Paternalism
- *Sarangeei mae* (whip of love)

### Child Protection Law

- Expansion of family court intervention
- Clear guidelines and criteria of child abuse.
- Independent legislation of child abuse and juvenile justice systems

### Summary



- The number of child abuse reports has been increasing
- Most abuse cases are committed by parents at home.
- The rate of isolation and prosecution is too low and most victims are sent back to their own family.
- The current law, public awareness, and the independent legislation should be promoted more vigorously.



THANK  
YOU!