

Oppgitte interessekonflikter: Ingen

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Verdens helse

Misbruk av barn i Swaziland

■ En av tre kvinner i Swaziland har opplevd seksuell vold i en eller annen form som barn. Det er et av funnene fra en uvanlig studie om forekomsten av seksuell og fysisk vold mot mindreårige (1). Dette er et stort problem i mange land, men det er få lav- og mellominntektsland der man virkelig har anerkjent det og bevisst jobbet for å samle epidemiologiske data som utgangspunkt for forebygging. Det sier Alexander Butchart fra Verdens helseorganisasjon (2).

I studien, som er publisert i *The Lancet*, fant man at det var kjærestere og ektemenn som hyppigst sto bak seksuelle overgrep, mens andre mannlige slektninger (ikke inkludert fedre) ofte sto for annen fysisk vold. Seksuelle overgrep skjedde oftest i hjemmet eller hjemme hos en venn, slektning eller nabo. Under halvparten av hendelsene var rapportert til myndighetene.

1 244 kvinner i alderen 13–24 år deltok i spørreundersøkelsen om seksuell vold og misbruk før fylte 18 år og om egen helse. Hele 96 % av dem som ble bedt om å delta, besvarte spørsmålene. Det å ha vært utsatt for seksuell vold hadde sammenheng med erfaring med seksuelt overførbart sykdom, komplikasjoner under graviditet, spontanabort, uønsket graviditet og depresjon.

Ifølge klinisk psykolog Ndo Mdlalose, som holder til i hovedstaden Mbabane, lider ofrene ofte av depresjon, panikkanfall og angst. Til å hjelpe dem som trenger det finnes det kun to psykologer – de to har ansvaret for hele landet.

– Misbruk av barn har også vært assosiert med bredere helseproblemer som diabetes, iskemisk hjertesykdom, seksuelt overførbare sykdommer og annen helserisikoatferd, f.eks. røyking, sier James Mercy fra Division of Violence Prevention ved Centers for Disease Control i USA.

Arbeid for forbedringer i lovgivningen og programmer for å forebygge seksuelt misbruk tyder på at man Swaziland er på rett vei når det gjelder forebygging av seksuell vold mot barn i fremtiden.

Oda Riska

oriska@hotmail.com
Tidsskriftet

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