Abstract

The problem of abused children or youngsters, the socio-demographic characteristics of the families who abuse and the impact of mistreatments in the children and young people’s acting are the central themes of this essay. The history of mistreatments is part of humanity history, if originally the aggression and hostility against children and young people was socially accepted; nowadays the efforts of organizations concerned with the Children and Youth try to protect minors and to promote healthy lifestyles, such as the Comissões de Protecção de Crianças e Jovens em Perigo (CPCI). In an attempt to better understanding this phenomenon, theories have emerged with different types of explanation and approaches to possible explanations, although the consensus view that it is necessary to understand the link in a network of various dimensions (cultural, psychological, social and so on). On the other side, several studies have been addressing the impact of mistreatment in several areas of children and young people’s acting and several factors have been identified as a risk to the occurrence of violence and negligence within the family. This descriptive and correlational study, involved 60 children and young people, marked by the CPCI’s as mistreated, aged between 6 and 16 years, parents who abuse and teachers. The process of investigation allowed to describe some characteristics of families that could form the basis of mistreatment or exacerbate inappropriate conduct, such as situations of unemployment or social isolation. It was also verified that the problems of focus, aggression and anxiety and depression symptoms appear to be an acting of mistreated children or young people. It was also realized that there is a strong link between several areas of behaviour, indicating that the problems caused by mistreatment are transversal to several areas of behaviour.
On the other hand, the study concedes that this sample the specific behaviours dominate the outsourced its profile. Finally, a behaviour pattern was drawn through a more qualitative analysis, in order to facilitate intervention with children and young people and to alert parents and educators about the importance of dialogue, attention and vigilance.