

# Barriers to preventing and combating child abuse: A scoping review protocol

Joana Guarda-Rodrigues<sup>1</sup>  
[joana.r.rodrigues@escl.pt](mailto:joana.r.rodrigues@escl.pt)

Odete Lemos e Sousa<sup>2</sup>  
[olemos@escl.pt](mailto:olemos@escl.pt)

Ana Pastorinho<sup>3</sup>  
[aisp@campus.escl.pt](mailto:aisp@campus.escl.pt)

Susana Santos<sup>4</sup>  
[susana.qsantos@gmail.com](mailto:susana.qsantos@gmail.com)

Silvia Luz<sup>5</sup>  
[sluz@escl.pt](mailto:sluz@escl.pt)

Maria Pires<sup>6</sup>  
[mcpires@uatlantica.pt](mailto:mcpires@uatlantica.pt)

<sup>1</sup>Professor adjunto, Departamento de Enfermagem da Criança e do Jovem, Escola Superior de Enfermagem de Lisboa.

<sup>2</sup>Professor adjunto, Departamento de Enfermagem da Criança e do Jovem, Escola Superior de Enfermagem de Lisboa.

<sup>3</sup>Enfermeira generalista, Urgência Pediátrica, Centro Hospitalar Universitário Lisboa Central - Hospital Dona Estefânia.

<sup>4</sup>Enfermeira generalista, Urgência Pediátrica, Centro Hospitalar Universitário Lisboa Central - Hospital Dona Estefânia.

<sup>5</sup>Enfermeira Especialista, Cirurgia Pediátrica e Unidade de Queimados, Centro Hospitalar Universitário Lisboa Central - Hospital D. Estefânia.

<sup>6</sup>Professor adjunto, Escola Superior de Saúde Atlântica.

## Abstract

### Introduction

According to the World Health Organization, in 2019, approximately 1 billion children between the ages of 2 and 17 years experienced some form of violence. In Portugal, in 2021, the *Comissão de Proteção de Crianças e Jovens* identified a significant increase in the number of children in situations of risk or victims of abuse, 3619 more than in the previous year.

Healthcare professionals are required to be qualified and intervene in the area of child abuse, given their privileged position in the promotion of rights and protection of children, namely, in the identification and combat of abuse and violence against children, as well as its prevention, through support for families and parenting.

### Objective

To map the barriers to preventing and combating child abuse, as experienced by healthcare professionals. In this way, it is intended to answer the review question: What are the barriers identified by health professionals in preventing and combating child abuse?

### Method

This scoping review will follow the methodology proposed by the Joanna Briggs Institute. Eligibility criteria will be defined based on population, concept and context (PCC). Regarding the research strategy and identification of studies, the following electronic databases will be used: *MEDLINE Complete*, *CINAHL Complete*, *Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection*, *Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials*, *MedicLatina*, *SCOPUS*, *Web of Science*. The search for unpublished studies and gray literature will be conducted in *Repositórios Científicos de Acesso Aberto de Portugal*, *Portal de Periódicos da Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior*, *OpenGrey* and the *National Gray Literature Collection*. The research will be executed in three phases. The search results will be exported to the *Mendeley Desktop Reference Manager*, through which duplicate records will be identified and removed. The *Rayyan QCRI* platform will be used to facilitate the archiving, organization and selection of articles. The selection of documents will be carried out by analyzing the title and/or abstract. This process will be undertaken by at least two independent reviewers, using another reviewer to clarify discrepancies. Documents that meet the eligibility criteria progress to the next stage, the full reading. The results obtained after the screening will be presented according to the *PRISMA-ScR* recommendations. The extraction and synthesis of data, namely, the identification of the type of abuse and the existing barriers, will be conducted using instruments developed by the reviewers.

### Results and Discussion

The mapping and discussion of barriers to the prevention and combat of child maltreatment, identified by healthcare professionals, will constitute an informative tool to support research and decision-making regarding intervention strategies.

### Conclusions and Implications

This protocol constitutes a starting point for the analysis and systematization of existing

#### Corresponding Author:

Joana Guarda-Rodrigues  
E-mail: [joana.r.rodrigues@escl.pt](mailto:joana.r.rodrigues@escl.pt)



evidence, with a focus on barriers to the prevention and combat of child abuse, identified by healthcare professionals. It is hoped that the scoping review will contribute to the creation of a training program for healthcare professionals and also as a support for the analysis of clinical practices and improvement of qualifications and interventions of healthcare professionals in the promotion of children's rights, namely, in the support of families, parenting and in the combat of child maltreatment.

### Keywords

Child Abuse; Violence; Health Personnel; Pediatric Nursing; Review.

### References

1. Comissão Nacional de Promoção dos Direitos e Proteção das Crianças e Jovens. Relatório Anual de Avaliação da Atividade das CPCJ 2021 [Internet]. 2022. Available from: <https://www.cnpdp-cj.gov.pt/relatorio-atividades>
2. Peters MDJ, Godfrey C, McInerney P, Munn Z, Tricco AC, Khalil, H. Chapter 11: Scoping Reviews (2020 version). In: Aromataris E, Munn Z (Editors). JBI Manual for Evidence Synthesis, JBI, 2020. Available from <https://synthesismanual.jbi.global>. <https://doi.org/10.46658/JBIMES-20-12>
3. Roy J, Williamson E, Pitt K, Stanley N, Man M, Feder G, et al. "It felt like there was always someone there for us": Supporting children affected by domestic violence and abuse who are identified by general practice. Health Soc Care Community [Internet]. 2022 Jan;30(1):165–74. Available from: <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip.shib&db=c-cm&AN=153993779&lang=pt-pt&site=ehost-live>
4. World Health Organization. Violence against children. [Internet]. 2020. [cited 2022 Dec 9]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-children>