

LETTER TO EDITOR

Children in Ukrainian-Russian War 2022

Stefan Bittmann

Department of Pediatrics, Ped Mind Institute, Medical and Finance Center Epe, Germany

Correspondence should be addressed to Stefan Bittmann, Department of Pediatrics, Ped Mind Institute, Medical and Finance Center Epe, Germany

Received: 31 March 2022; Accepted: 06 April 2022; Published: 16 April 2022

Copyright © Stefan Bittmann. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

LETTER TO EDITOR

420 million children live in a war or conflict zone [1-4]. That is almost twice as many as 20 years ago. They suffer from fear, hunger and disease. Around 27 million children cannot go to school because of the armed fighting. Children are generally not the focus of attention when it comes to war victims and the consequences of war. They remain hidden behind the focus on political and material consequences of war, as is the case when wounded, war-disabled or war-related invalidity are brought into focus [5-8]. With the term war child an almost unmanageable court of meaning is called up, if it is used for all war children of the world and referred to all times. In Germany, the term war child developed around the beginning of the 1990s, when that generation that had experienced World War II during their childhood began to break their silence about it. Since then, the term war child gained widespread media attention. At the same time, academia and research have taken up the phenomenon of these war childhoods. Internationally, the term war child sometimes results in divergent meanings in other national languages. It can be associated with very different contents. Differences are already apparent for the Second World War, for example, when it comes to the war children in occupied Poland. The English term war children is used in some countries as well as the French term *enfant de la guerre* as a synonym for child of occupation and thus in a different context, but also with reference to the Second World War. In France alone, the number of children of German occupation soldiers from World War II is estimated at 200,000. Although they too are war children in the original sense of the word, for them the focus is usually on the devaluations and humiliations associated with their origins, which both they and their mothers experienced and which could lead to considerable impairment of identity and self-esteem. Some of them find the possibility of dual citizenship liberating.

The term fills with other content when the children of the war hotbeds in the non-European area or even in the 21st century come into focus [7-11]. The dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 or the Vietnam War between 1955 and 1975 are each associated with special implications for the children of these wars, as is the genocide of the Bengalis in the Bangladesh War of 1971 or the civil war in Syria since 2011. In Japan, the children of war at that time still suffer from radiation-induced mutations today. For the Vietnam

War, different consequences of the war have to be considered, depending on whether napalm or the defoliant Agent Orange was used. And the long-term consequences for the children of war in Syria, in Afghanistan or, since 2014, in eastern Ukraine are not even foreseeable yet - with the exception of the already numerous mutilations caused by mines. Since Ukrainian war in 2022, the situation of the 7.5 million children in the Ukraine is again extraordinary depressed by realizing aggressiveness and war scenario of a Russian regime, which ignores any humanitarian corridors to remove children from fighting zones, nor to take care about the psychological consequences of being part of a war as a child. The extend of psychological effects on childhood health of these 7.5 million children is not foreseeable.

REFERENCES

1. Slone M and Peer A (2021) Children's reactions to war, armed conflict and displacement: Resilience in a social climate of support. *Current Psychiatry Reports* 23(11): 1-9.
2. Mohseni M, Ghasemi Dastgerdi A, Eftekhari Renani M (2020) War, armed conflict, and children's health. *Pediatric Archives* 27(6): 348-349.
3. Slone M and Mann S (2016) Effects of war, terrorism and armed conflict on young children: A systematic review. *Child Psychiatry & Human Development* 47(6): 950-965.
4. Michalek J, Lisi M, Binetti N et al. (2022) War-related trauma linked to increased sustained attention to threat in children. *Child Development*.
5. Bager L, Munk Laursen T, Skipper N et al. (2021) School performance of children whose parents suffered torture and war-a register-based study in Denmark. *European Journal of Public Health* 31(4): 749-755.
6. Toomey R, Alpern RE, White AJ et al. (2021) Physical health, behavioral and emotional functioning in children of gulf war veterans. *Life Sciences* 282: 119777.
7. Tanous O (2022) Structural violence and its effects on children living in war and armed conflict zones: A Palestinian perspective. *International Journal of Health Services* 52(1): 5-8.
8. The Lancet (2021) 9/11 at 20: After war, what? *Lancet* 398(10304): 931.
9. Stanton B, Davis B, Laraque-Arena D (2021) Global burden of violence. *Pediatric Clinics* 68(2): 339-349.
10. Veronese G, Pepe A, Cavazzoni F et al. (2021) Measuring agency in children: The development and validation of the War Child Agency Assessment Scale-Palestinian version (WCAAS-Pal). *Current Psychology*: 1-15.
11. Michalek JE, Lisi M, Awad D et al. (2021) The effects of a reading-based intervention on emotion processing in children who have suffered early adversity and war related trauma. *Frontiers in Psychology* 12: 934.