



A Comparative Analysis of Social Work Responses to Child Abuse in the United Arab Emirates

CRABTREE., S.A.

Abstract

This paper argues that social work in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is at an early developmental stage in relation to the implementation of effective services for children at risk of abuse. Research shows that social work training and practice has yet to develop an adequate indigenous response to child abuse. Additionally, it appears that crucial training for the detection of risk, as may be found in the wider international community, is not taught or practiced in the U.A.E, often due to cultural sensitivities regarding the open discussion of unlawful sexual practices in Islamic terms. A deficit in training in conjunction with disorganized social work responses to the issues of risk is not deemed sufficiently capable of adequately protecting children at risk due to a lack of legal frameworks and procedural guidelines to inform good practice.

Keywords: child abuse, United Arab Emirates, social work, Islam

Introduction

Social work in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) holds a particularly ambiguous role in that although the profession is partially recognized as having a very useful role to play in the general well-being of Emirati citizens, there is also a notable deficit in individual training. A lack of training however forms only one part of the constraints that militate against the creation of a professional base. Cultural sensitivities often prevents such training as does exist from being able to fully equip social workers with the knowledge and skills required for effective practice. In no area of social work is this deficit more clearly highlighted than in relation to child protection issues.

The UAE is comprised of a federation of seven emirates of which Dubai is one of the most affluent. The UAE itself, unlike many of its Gulf neighbours, is a progressive and peaceful nation, which boasts of excellent medical facilities, high literacy rates, low unemployment and welfare provision that surpasses many countries of the developed world in generosity and comprehensiveness (El Naggar Gaad, 2001; Eno, 2000).

Social work itself is seen, at least in theory, as an attractive career path for Emirati citizens, particularly young women, who unlike in many other Arab nations are politically encouraged

to enter the professional labour force. Feminization of the vocation is seen as highly desirable through being associated primarily, and often exclusively, with Emirati women and children, rather than with male or a mixed-race clientele, a stereotype often taken issue with in relation to social work in the West (Dominelli, 1996: 155).

In thinking of the educational needs of locally based social workers the need for culturally congruent models in working with Arab families is of course a very important consideration. The question remains whether cultural 'fit' should be attained at the expense of effective social work responses to local populations, compounded by a lack of exposure to the wide variety of social work models practiced in the international professional community.

This however, is precisely the situation in the UAE at present. An issue that is explored in depth in this paper, which offers a comparison of social work responses towards different forms of child abuse amongst social workers. In doing so it also seeks to contextualize this discussion by considering comparable issues taking place in Malaysia, which offers an alternative approach to social work with children at risk in an Islamic State.

Methods

This paper draws primarily on findings from a larger qualitative case study into indigenous forms of social work provision towards Emirati families in the UAE. For the purposes of this paper findings that relate to child protection work are considered in more detail. The aim here is to offer insights and an interpretation into how welfare services respond to potential child abuse situations in the UAE (Baker, 1999).

Data was collected through open-ended interviews with participants who were currently working in the area of social work and child welfare in specific settings where they would be likely to encounter child abuse situations, if such existed. The social work posts identified for study are based in local National schools, youth offender units and finally health settings. Participants came from two different sources, first professional social workers, and secondly social work students on placement in the same or closely similar settings to that of the professional group. All participants were Emirati and served an almost exclusively Emirati clientele.

Typical of many qualitative studies, in addition to the local constraints in identifying suitably qualified candidates, participants were limited in number (Marshall and Rossman, 1995). These eventually totaled ten individuals, almost equally divided into professional and student participants. In addition, course curricula at the local university to which the students were affiliated, was studied in order to discover to what extent child abuse issues were covered in the syllabi. Whilst finally, the content of final-year student theses were also considered in terms of student interest in and research on child abuse issues.

The study was informed by a comprehensive literature review of Islamic perspectives in social work. This in turn drew upon my interest in and extensive experience of teaching and practicing social work in two distinct Muslim countries: Malaysia and the UAE. A comparative approach is therefore used as an appropriate means of defining some of the key issues emerging for social workers working with Muslim families in the broad and challenging area of child welfare.

Finally the interview data were then analyzed according to qualitative methods of utilizing coding strategies. Here data are subjected to classification in terms of devising codes for oc-

curing phenomena. Single and recurring codes are noted, where the latter begin to form the basis of themes. These themes in turn become the findings of the study. (Brewer, 2000).

It should be noted however that there are several limitations to this study. First of all, to my best knowledge, accurate figures of child abuse cases are not readily available. It is therefore very difficult to ascertain the prevalence of this problem in the UAE. Secondly, the study was confined to the Emirates of Dubai and Sharjah, and although highly indicative in its implications, does not therefore include the UAE in its entirety. Thirdly, the small number of participants, although acceptable for qualitative research methods, does not permit generalization to all social welfare services engaged in children's services in the UAE (Yegidis and Weinbach, 2002).

Finally, in using Malaysia as a basis for comparison it must be noted that although an Islamic nation like the UAE, it is dissimilar in other respects. Like the UAE it has a social work tradition, and one that is equally indigenized from an earlier imperial heritage. However Malaysia is an explicitly recognized multicultural society that embraces a multifaith population. Whereas, the UAE is multicultural only in the sense of having an ethnically diverse population of foreign migrant workers, but citizens are specifically Emirati and Muslim, and make up only about 20% of the over all population.

The context of social work in the UAE

Although Islamic beliefs, derived from the Holy Qur'an, form the overarching schema for all matters pertaining to the spiritual and practical daily life of the *ummah* (the universal community of believers), there are many diverse Muslim societies whose cultural traditions and social constructions create a wealth of difference in how Islam is interpreted and incorporated into the lives of individuals and families (Barise, 2005; Hodge, 2005; Mehdi, 2005). So much is obvious, however it is equally true to say that this diversity can be found within the more ethnically homogenized Arab countries as well (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2001).

The main points in common in Islamic societies, in addition to general adherence to the Qur'an, lies in the centrality of the family unit as the primary institution in society (Hodge, 2005). In Arab societies like the UAE, family lines are traced through patriarchal, patrilineal lines of descent, unlike for example Muslims in Southeast Asia, where for the Minangkabau of West Sumatra and the Malay communities of Negeri Sembilan, lineage is traced through the mother's line (Ashencaen Crabtree, in press; Blackwood, 1995: 130).

To return to the patriarchal UAE however strict gender norms prevail, in which women are seen as the natural, and with rare exception, the exclusive caretakers of young children during the term of wedlock (Bouhdiba, 1977). Divorce however can often deprive Muslim mothers of their young children as the male prerogative exerts itself in terms of custody (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2001: 675).

In relation to male authority, fathers, husbands and sons in accordance with patriarchy, exercise *qiwamah* (guardianship) of women and girls, whose status is relatively lower than that of their menfolk (Haj-Yahia, 2003: 195). Although *qiwamah* is put forward as inherently benevolent and designed to protect the interests of women, the effects of *qiwamah* define, prescribe and control the parameters of the lives of females and their children to a great extent (Al-Khateeb, 1998).

Strict gender divisions in terms of tasks, roles, sexuality and freedom of movement have been argued as leading to greater social stability in comparison with the West (Al-Krenawi and Graham, 2001: 668). It is also said that Arab societies are collective rather than individualistic; and are concerned with the welfare of the whole rather than that of merely the individual unit, unlike once again the West (Al-Krenawi and Graham, 2003: 76). Although the ideal that a Muslim individual seeks to aspire to is that of 'selflessness', typical of collectivist frames of reference, this becomes an issue of concern where the individual is oppressed, as in child abuse (Al-Krenawi and Graham, 2003: 76). In this vein, Abu Baker and Dwairy observe that in Arab societies, 'An individual is expected to suffer silently if his or her voiced suffering would bring shame to the family' (2002: 5).

The authors go on to briefly comment that such societies are not 'child-centered' (Abu Baker and Dwairy: 2002: 8). Given the fact that children are apparently so valued within Arab families, this is an intriguing and enigmatic statement (Sharifzadeh, 1998). My interpretation is that what is indirectly meant here is that in Arab society the idea of children having rights as well as adults, is one that is generally not accepted as they are primarily seen as under guardianship, as well as being valued family assets. Consequently this becomes an issue of the politics of power unequally dispersed within the family unit disfavoring women and children.

The male prerogative within the family is that of protector and provider (Al-Khateeb, 1998). However this is also open to abuse in the shape of domestic violence which, it is argued, is endemic in Arab societies (Douki *et al.*, 2003; Haj-Yahia, 2003). Spousal abuse by husbands is propagated through two main factors: that of victim-blaming for provoking the attack together with generally being seen as a private family issue rather than a 'social and criminal problem' (Douki *et al.*, 2003: 166). Spousal abuse in the West however is seen as frequently integrally connected with the abuse of children (Perrott, 1994). If we extend this assumption to Arab societies it can be inferred that the abuse of children may exist in such households and is kept an even darker secret, as is indicated by the dearth of research literature on the subject of child abuse in Muslim populations.

The discussion of the general abuse of children, and particularly in its sexual manifestations (such as occurs in female genital mutilation) appears to be a topic that is deeply unwelcome and indeed often completely unacknowledged in certain Muslim nations in Africa, Pakistan and the Arab states (Brooks, 1995; Mahamud-Hassan, 2004; Miles, 1996; Taylor, 2003). Almost uniquely therefore, Abu Baker and Dwairy (2003) tackle this challenging subject in their discussion of the sexual abuse of a twelve-year-old girl in Palestine. A noteworthy point is that of reported sexual assaults by family members or neighbours in Palestine in which the majority of the victims were boys. This gender disparity is however left unexplained in the paper. I would argue that this forms a further example of cultural sensitivity, since the sexual abuse of boys would be considered a double form of *zina* (unlawful sexual practices) in terms of child sexual abuse and same-sex congress (Stang Dahl, 1997: 165).

Homosexuality in Islam, regardless of the issue of child abuse, is a fraught issue, prohibited by the Qur'an, subject to enormous reticence and angry denial, and yet with a long history, often much celebrated in Muslim societies, including the recent regime of the Taliban in Afghanistan (Ashencaen Crabtree and Baba, 2001: 475-6).

In modern Arab societies, the issue of sexual abuse of male children is in practical terms one that may be more easily concealed within families, as it is more usually the vaginal injury and loss of virginity through rape, as well as pregnancy, that may finally force a family to bring a daughter for medical attention.

Accordingly we learn from Abu Baker and Dwairy that the sex of child victims notwithstanding, it is evident that in Arab society the public knowledge of sexual abuse relegates a family to

the status of 'untouchables' (2003: 5). The loss of the family's valued reputation will result in the harsh blaming of the victim in proportion to the diminishment of the abuser's responsibility for their acts. The threatened dissolution of the family bonds may spell great financial hardship for a family, commensurate with gender norms and the sex of the abuser(s). Thus disclosure of abuse jeopardizes general family cohesion and inclusion in society, leading to a likely family response of denial as well as continued abuse or, as is inferred, an even worse fate to prevent publicly tarnishing family honour (Abu Baker and Dwairy, 2003).

Research findings

Censored social work curricula

In the UAE there is now only one institution of higher education offering social work courses, this being the national and oldest established university in the UAE, the University of the United Arab Emirates (UAUEU). Until recent restructuring of departments social work was also offered as a major subject at a sister institution, Zayed University (ZU) in Dubai. At both institutions the teaching curriculum was notable for prioritizing particular topics within the broad parameters of social work, in which certain subjects, considered mainstream elsewhere, were utterly marginalized. Specifically these revolve around child welfare issues, in which although child development was a popular topic for students, the darker areas of child protection were a neglected, indeed censored subject along with sundry other issues considered *haram* (forbidden in Islam). That this censorship poorly prepared students for their social work placements became apparent at ZU through academic supervision and reported case-work.

Social work with children in the UAE

In theory social workers likely to come into contact with abused children are school social workers and those in allied youth services. School social work is a very sought-after specialty in this region and consequently the responses of these practitioners towards the topic of child abuse produced some interesting results.

The role of the school social worker is integral to the school routine. Such practitioners are strongly involved in promoting cultural and religious values that may be gender normative as well (Ashencaen Crabtree, 2004). Thus at school, as at home, girls and boys learn what conduct and values are appropriate to Islam, the UAE, their tribal customs and their sex. In addition school social workers may also find their time taken up with policing and disciplining tasks involving poor academic performance, truancy and general misbehavior among pupils (Swadi, 1999: 27). Accordingly the more obvious social work intervention skills in dealing with troubled students will be required on virtually a daily basis. However, my findings indicated that social workers in several government-run and private schools in Dubai and Sharjah, had a significantly low awareness of child abuse issues in contrast to hospital-based workers and occasionally, social work students.

Perceptions of physical abuse

Findings showed that for school social workers the concept of physical abuse of children, while understood, was not considered a serious issue for most interviewees. This is likely to be

because so often it is reframed as justified corporal punishment, a form of discipline commonly used throughout the U.A.E at home, at school and in judicial sentencing of minors (as well as adults). It is also conjectured that society in general experiences desensitization towards the notion of physical abuse. Two notorious social examples highlight this assertion. Firstly, the physical and sexual maltreatment of Asian migrant domestic workers is a well-known daily reality for thousands of girls and women throughout the Arab nations. Furthermore, until a ban was issued late in 2005, the kidnapping and enforced labour of young children, many pre-schoolers, from the Indian subcontinent and Africa to serve as camel jockeys, was prevalent and socially accepted in the UAE.

Yet the tide appears to be turning whereby the younger generation is beginning to challenge such practices based on personal experiences, for example through growing student interest in investigating this topic in supervised final-year research projects at ZU. The concern of students in exploring these issues is a promising one and perhaps a starting point towards changing social attitudes.

Recognizing psychological abuse

For school social workers the topic of psychological abuse of pupils was frequently reframed as emotional problems resulting from the outcome of divorce or the death of a parent. Perhaps this is not so surprising in view of the fact that school bullying for instance, a ubiquitous if poorly managed problem in many international communities, is an issue that is also largely unacknowledged in schools in the UAE. It is one however that has been fruitfully discussed in group interviews with students (Ashencaen Crabtree, 2004: 64).

Fortunately during the data collection period there was a general media campaign in Dubai aimed at raising public consciousness towards the subject of emotional abuse and its impact upon the well-being of children. Dissemination of this sort, mandated by government circles, was probably partially instrumental in facilitating research interviews with participants on this subject at least.

Gendering the concept of neglect

Neglect as a topic was viewed in ways that closely reflected cultural assumptions about parenthood. Accordingly it was most commonly viewed in terms of female pathology, whereby neglectful mothers were seen as failing to carry out maternal duties correctly in accordance with localized, cultural notions of Muslim motherhood. These emphasized that a woman's primary function is to nurture her children, implement appropriate social training and implant knowledge and values commensurate with the teachings of Islam (Schleifer, 1988).

If a mother was known to be non-Emirati then her alien background as a foreigner was blamed for a lack of sufficient maternal competence in this regard. Such racist notions were equally applied to converted Muslims as well as birth-right Muslims from poorer nations outside of the UAE, such as Pakistan. By contrast where a neglectful parent was the father then a whole different set of standards was applied. Men were duly exonerated from culpability on the grounds that they intrinsically have insufficient aptitude to care adequately for young children, hence resulting in neglect.

Addressing sexual abuse

This area provided the most fertile ground for comparison between the responses of hospital and school-based social workers, who by virtue of their professional experience were expected to have more knowledge on the subject than sheltered students. However with school social workers attempts to discuss sexual abuse of children were met with reluctance or outright denial, the subject seen as quite unseemly or indeed completely incomprehensible.

By contrast hospital social workers showed more awareness of what constituted child sexual abuse as well as a greater willingness to discuss this issue, often because of futile and distressing attempts to help such children as they passed through the health services. Nonetheless this remained a subject that was difficult to discuss openly and moreover is one that social workers are not empowered to deal with in any effective way, as the following two cases exemplify.

Case example 1

A 10-year-old Emirati girl came to the attention of the social welfare services as she was discovered to be in a state of advanced pregnancy. Upon investigation by the hospital authorities it was discovered that the child had been raped and impregnated by her own father with whom she was obliged to live following the divorce of her parents. Apart from assisting her to give birth to the baby little more could be done to help her deal with her traumatic experiences. So far as is known by the social work department the girl and her baby were returned to the custody of the father as her legal guardian.

In the above case it was the daughter's pregnancy alone that brought her abuse to light. However there was no further involvement by social workers in her case after being returned to the care of an abusive parent.

Case example 2

A 14-year-old Emirati girl with genital injuries was brought to a UAE hospital by her mother. In private the girl informed a social worker that she was being repeatedly raped by her brother. She asked the social worker not to disclose this to her family as she was terrified of their reaction, saying that they would kill her if they knew of her plight. The social worker called the police and informed the mother of the girl's allegation. The mother angrily denied her daughter's claim and instead accused their gardener, a disposable Asian migrant labourer. The daughter persisted with her allegations against her brother but the police were powerless to act unless the mother pressed charges. This she adamantly refused to do. After treatment the daughter was sent back home into the abusive family situation without any charges being pressed or her safety guaranteed in any way. No further information is known regarding her fate.

This case similarly echoes some of the issues noted by Abu Baker and Dwairy (2003) who specifically describe the tension Arab families experience regarding disclosure, where the strongest impulse is to exonerate the perpetrator, even at cost to the victim.

Discussion

In order for the UAE to begin to tackle the issue of child abuse in its midst, a concerted response is needed to several overlapping issues revolving around social need versus cultural sensitivities. Because so much child abuse takes place within the family setting this is sufficient reason for it to be regarded as a deeply sensitive issue in any culture. However it is true to say that this is a matter of particular import for Muslim families in general (Garbarino and Eckenrode, 1997: 79-80). Arab social workers are acutely aware of the notion of family privacy and are most loath to be seen to invade it by rigorous investigation. Especially as Muslim

precepts militate against women social workers encountering male strangers even in the course of their duties.

Abuse of children depends much on how children are perceived within the family (and society) as well as the daily stressors and the coping abilities of care-givers. When children are regarded as being in many senses 'owned' by their parents (and other senior family members) this prerogative overshadows the alternative view that children have specific, individual and inalienable rights of their own. These rights of course can only be defined and endorsed through the processes of law, such as the UK Children Act, 1989, to take but one European example.

Social workers in the UAE stand in an invidious position. Firstly the lack of adequate training prevents them from being able to identify risk of abuse in children. If professional concerns are raised about the welfare of a child it is very difficult to intervene when social workers are discouraged from proper investigation through social and gender norms. The family as a central socializing institution in the UAE is mainly seen as sacrosanct and largely independent of the authorities in terms of curbing parental control and power.

Furthermore the current lack of procedural guidelines prevents social workers and the police from being able to take effective action to protect victims as there are no specific places of safety designated for their care and no legal means of removing them from the abusive situation. Finally, there are only limited ways of charging perpetrators through police enforcement when abuse is apparent.

In order to deal with child abuse more effectively in an Islamic State such as the UAE it may be worth taking some lessons from another Muslim State, that of Malaysia for example. In this country the topic of child abuse, in all its manifestations, is one that holds a prominent position in social work curricula with a view to equipping social work students with the skills and knowledge to work with families. Additionally, foreign expertise in child protection issues is sought at seminars and international conferences. While this is not deemed a palatable topic and is under-researched in Malaysia, as shown by the lack of research literature on the subject, it is nonetheless recognized within legal frameworks.

Through these national comparisons the cultural idiosyncrasies of the UAE are brought into sharper focus, whereby in Malaysia the pious adherence to the Qu'ran is not seen as incompatible with a wider understanding of and engagement with social problems that affect the lives of citizens (Ashencaen Crabtree, 1999; Ashencaen Crabtree and Baba, 2001). Crucially Malaysian social workers are empowered to act through the Malaysian Child Protection Act, 1991, whereas to date no such legal protocols have been established in the UAE (Munir, 1993).

Conclusion

The time is clearly ripe for a concerted move towards establishing proper measures to protect children in the UAE. Thus it is heartening to learn that this deficit is now beginning to be addressed through a new social work initiative operating under the Government of Dubai. This has undertaken the momentous task of drawing up procedural guidelines for child protection in connection with police enforcement, although no details are available at the time of writing. However this could represent a major breakthrough in enabling social work to develop more effective ways of working with families at risk. Ideally it would also serve to elevate the status

of social work in the UAE; moving it from a rather peripheral position to one that is central to the implementation of effective services capable of protecting local children.

References

- ABU BAKAR, M.B. (1993). Child Protection Principles and Applications, *Child Abuse Review*, 2, 119-126.
- ABU BAKER, K., & DWAIKY, M. (2002) Cultural norms versus state law in treating incest: a suggested model for Arab families, *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 27 (1), 109-123.
- AL-KATEEB, S.A.H. (1998). Muslim Women's Perceptions of Equality: Case Study of Saudi Women, *Mediterranean Quarterly*, 9 (2), 110-131.
- AL-KRENAWI, A., & GRAHAM, J.R. (2003). Principles of Social Work Practice in the Muslim Arab World, *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 25(4), 75-92.
- AL-KRENAWI, A., & GRAHAM, J.R. (2001). The Cultural Mediator: Bridging the Gap Between a Non-Western Community and Professional Social Work Practice, *British Journal of Social Work*, 31, 665-685.
- ASHENCAEN CRABTREE, S. (in press). *Gender, Madness and the Asylum in Sarawak*. Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies.
- ASHENCAEN CRABTREE, S. (2004). Raising the Profile of School Social Work in the UAE, *Teachers, Learners and Curriculum*, Volume 2. College of Education, Zayed University, 63-66.
- ASHENCAEN CRABTREE, S., & BABA, I. (2001). The Islamic Perspective in Social Work Education, *Social Work Education*, 20 (4), 469-481.
- ASHENCAEN CRABTREE, S. (1999). Teaching Anti-Discriminatory Practice in Malaysia, *Social Work Education International Journal*, 18 (3), 247-255.
- BAKER, T.L. (1999). *Doing Social Research*, Third Edition, Boston: McGraw Hill.
- BLACKWOOD, E. (1995). Senior Women, Model Mothers, and Dutiful Wives: Managing Gender Contradictions in a Minangkabau Village'. In A. Ong, & M.G. Peletz (Eds.), *Bewitching Women, Pious Men: Gender and Body Politics in Southeast Asia* (pp. 130-145), Berkeley: University of California.
- BREWER, J.D. (2000). *Ethnography*, Buckingham: Open University Press.
- BOUHDIRA, A. (1997). The Child and the Mother in Arab-Muslim Society, *Psychological Dimensions of Near Eastern Studies*, 1997, 126-141.
- BROOKS, G. (1995). *Nine Parts of Desire: The Hidden World of Islamic Women*, New York: Anchor Books.
- BARISE, A. (2005). Social Work with Muslims: Insights from the Teachings of Islam, *Critical Social Work*, 6 (2): 1-17.
- BERG, B.L. (2004). *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. (Fifth Edition). Boston: Pearson.
- DOMINELLI, L. (1996). Deprofessionalizing Social Work: Anti-Oppressive Practice, Competencies and Postmodernism, *British Journal of Social Work*, 26, 153-175.
- DOUKI, S., NACEF, F., BELHADJ, A., BOUSAKER, A., & GHACHEM, R. (2003). Violence against women in Arab and Islamic Countries. *Archives of Women's Mental Health*, 6, 165-171.
- EL NAGGAR GAAD, E. (2001). Educating children with Down's syndrome in the United Arab Emirates, *British Journal of Special Education*, 28 (4), 195-203.
- ENO, F.A. (2000) A World of Difference. *WE Magazine*, 4 (2), 86.
- GARBARINO, J., & ECKENRODE, J. (1997). *Understanding Abusive Families*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- HAI-YAHIA, M.M. (2003). Beliefs About Wife Beating Among Arab Men from Israel: The Influence of their Patriarchal Ideology, *Journal of Family Violence*, 18 (4), 193-206.
- HODGE, D.R. (2005). Social Work and the House of Islam: Orientating Practitioners to the Beliefs and Values of Muslims in the United States, *Social Work*, 50 (20), 162-173.

- MAHAMUD-HASSAN, N. (2004). It Doesn't Happen In Our Society, *Index on Censorship*, 33 (1), 38-41.
- MARSHALL, C., & ROSSMAN, G.B. (1995). *Designing Qualitative Research*. 2nd Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- MEHDI, A. (2005). Journal Entry from Tehran. In F. Afzal-Khan (Ed.), *Shattering the Stereotypes: Muslim Women Speak Out*. Northampton, Mass: Olive Branch Press.
- MILES, M. (1996). Walking delicately Around Mental Handicap, Sex Education and Abuse in Pakistan, *Child Abuse Review*, 5, 263-274.
- PERROTT, S. (1994). Working with Men who Abuse Women and Children, In C. Lupton, & T. Gillespie (Eds.), *Working with Violence* (pp. 135-152), Houndsmill, Basingstoke: MacMillan/BASW.
- SCHLEIFER, A. (1988). The Role of the Muslim Mother in Education in Contemporary Society, *Muslim Educational Quarterly*, 5 (2).
- SHARIFZADEH, V-S. (1998). Families with Middle Eastern Roots. In E.W. Lynch, & M.J. Hanson (Eds.), *Developing Cross-Cultural Competence* (2nd Edition) (pp. 319-351), Maryland: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.
- SCHVANEVELDT, P.L., KERPELMAN, J.L., & SCHVANEVELDT, J. (2005). Generational and Cultural Changes in Family Life in the United Arab Emirates: A Comparison of Mothers and Daughters, *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 36 (1), 77-91.
- STANG DAHL, T. (1997). *The Muslim Family: A Study of Women's Rights in Islam*. Oxford/Norway: Scandinavian University Press.
- SWADI, H. (1999). Child Mental Health Services in the United Arab Emirates, *Child Psychology & Psychiatry Review*, 4 (1), 27-29.
- TAYLOR, V. (2003). Female genital mutilation: *cultural practice or child abuse?*, *Paediatric Nursing*. 15 (1), 31-34.
- YEGIDIS, B.L., & Weinbach, R.W. (2002). *Research Methods for Social Workers*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- YIN, R.K. (1993). *Applications of Case Study Research*. California: Sage.

Author note

Sara Ashencaen Crabtree
 Assistant Professor
 Department of Social Work
 The Chinese University of Hong Kong
 Shatin
 New Territories
 Hong Kong
 Tel.: (852) 2609 7557
 Fax: (852) 2603 5018
 E-mail: crabtree@cuhk.edu.hk