

# A Literature Review of *Yogo* Teachers' Responses to Child Abuse

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**Purpose:** The objectives of this study were to review trends in research on school responses to child abuse, and to identify the current status and issues regarding responses to child abuse by *Yogo* teachers, the only health professionals placed in schools.

**Methods:** We searched the Japanese literature from 2000—when the Child Abuse Prevention Law was enacted—to 2010 in *Japana Centra Revuo Medicina Web, Ver.4* and *Citation Information by The National Institute of Informatics (CiNii)* using the keywords “child abuse,” “school children (elementary and junior high school)” and “*Yogo* teacher.” The research design, methods, and contents of these studies on school responses to child abuse were sorted for analysis.

**Results:** Eleven academic journal articles were retrieved, of which three were studies of *Yogo* teachers. Analysis of the eleven articles generated four general types of responses: “support for child abuse issue,” “calls for improvement of school organizational systems,” “workshops about child abuse,” and “informing teachers about relevant systems and laws.” The results demonstrated that *Yogo* teachers were often in positions where child abuse could be detected at an early stage, and in many cases they were practically involved.

**Discussion:** *Yogo* teachers were highly aware of their roles and potential roles in child abuse cases. Additional experimental studies should be conducted to examine specific support that would help promote school responses to child abuse issues. *Yogo* teachers should be permitted to fully exercise their professional knowledge in the school’s response to child abuse issues from preventive perspectives. Future special investigations on the expert-team support involving families should be conducted with *Yogo* teachers.

**Keywords:** child abuse, *yogo* teacher, support

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## 1. Introduction

Children’s physical and mental health has been greatly impacted by recent rapid changes in lifestyle and the social environment due to urbanization, an aging population with a low birthrate, and an information-oriented society, and their health-related problems have also become more diverse and complex. Among these problems, the issue of child abuse has become increasingly dire and is a

social problem that requires immediate attention (Japanese Society of School Health, 2010). There is a constant flow of serious cases resulting in death and human rights violations of children, as well as a continuing number of consultation cases brought to child guidance centers (Health and Welfare Statistics Association, 2008; Statistical Association Health Foundation, 2008). These facts suggest that child abuse is a leading social problem that should be urgently addressed. To this end, the Japanese

government introduced the Act on the Prevention of Child Abuse (hereafter, the Child Abuse Prevention Law) in 2000 to raise social consciousness about child abuse. In April 2004, this law was revised as follows (The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2007a). This amendment shows the considerable efforts taken to reinforce early detection and prevention of child abuse, by extending cases that must be reported from those involving “abused children” to those involving “potentially abused children.” After such efforts, child abuse cases are continuing to increase in terms of seriousness and amount of news coverage as well as number of reported cases and consultations (The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2007b).

In regard to school responses to child abuse, in January 2010, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology issued a notice called *Promotion of Appropriate Child Abuse Prevention in Institutes Such As Schools*, where the effects of prevention are targeted (The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2010). The notice advocates the promotion of appropriate child abuse prevention in institutes such as schools and emphasizes the following points: (1) encouragement to follow laws on child abuse prevention, (2) encouragement to administer appropriate preventive measures against child abuse in institutes such as schools, (3) promotion of child abuse prevention actions suitable for community situations, and cooperation with related organizations such as school boards and social welfare bureaus for children, and (4) encouragement for schools and school boards to improve teacher training programs related to responsiveness to child abuse by actively using the training materials published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, entitled *Child Abuse Prevention and Schools* (The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2010).

*Yogo* teachers are school nursing professionals who have teacher’s license and responsible for promoting the physical and psychological health development and education of “children and students” in Japan, and are the only health professionals placed in schools (Japanese Association of *Yogo* Teacher Education, 2007). In 2007, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology published *Guidelines for Yogo Teachers on Child Abuse* in order to help them improve their responses to child abuse, and also encouraged them to use the guidelines

effectively (The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2007). *Yogo* teachers in school health rooms are in a unique position to detect physical and mental abuse cases more easily than other school teachers and staff. Therefore, *Yogo* teachers are expected to detect and respond to child abuse at earlier stages; indeed, this is the rationale underlying the Ministry issuance of the guidelines for *Yogo* teachers.

Internal and external cooperation with other relevant organizations is essential for schools to respond properly to child abuse. While laws stipulate the need for early detection and obligatory reporting alongside close cooperation across different professions, some studies show disparities in the perceptions held by administrators, school teachers, and staff members (The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2006; Tamai, 2007). In addition, other studies report that the levels of promotion of inter-professional cooperation vary by community; in some communities cooperation systems have not been functioning well or have not even been established (Shibasaki, 2006). Naturally, approaches in response to child abuse will differ among school administration, homeroom teachers, heads of student discipline, and *Yogo* teachers, as a result of their particular positions. Therefore, the role that *Yogo* teachers play in the prevention of child abuse is of great importance.

Accordingly, there are high expectations on *Yogo* teachers to detect child abuse cases early and to implement preventive measures where possible. We also urgently need to identify factors that promote or hamper internal and external cooperation between *Yogo* teachers and other relevant organizations.

#### Footnote

A “*Yogo* teacher” is a special licensed educator who supports children’s growth and development through health education and health services on the basis of principles of health promotion in all areas of educational activities in school. (A resolution of *Yogo* teacher’s General Meeting at Tokushima city in Japan, 2004)

## 2. Purpose

The objectives of this study were to review previous studies on school responses to child abuse in order to identify research trends, investigate the current status of *Yogo* teacher's responses to child abuse, and summarize issues that still need to be addressed from the perspective of preventive measures taken in the field of school health.

## 3. Methods

### 3.1. Selection of Papers and Literature for the Study

We conducted a literature review of Japanese academic journal articles with descriptions of school responses to child abuse, in accordance with the aims of the present study. The search covered articles published between 2000, the year that the Child Abuse Prevention Law was enacted, and 2010, using *Japana Centra Revuo Medicina Web, Ver.4*, and *Citation Information by The National Institute of Informatics (CiNii)*. The keywords used to conduct the search were “child abuse,” “school children (elementary and junior high school),” and “*Yogo* teacher”. We adopted academic journal articles, but case studies, short abstracts, and editorial comments were excluded. Foreign literature was excluded from the study because school responses to child abuse would be influenced by differences in national educational systems as well as in health and welfare systems.

### 3.2. Analysis

A literature review form was created for subsequent analysis. Articles were chronologically listed along with journal titles, objectives, methods, results, issues to be addressed, and keywords. Then, through a review of the contents of articles and focusing on optimal responses to child abuse by school teachers/staff and *Yogo* teachers who were involved in the reported cases, we identified issues to be further addressed.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Literature Reviewed (Table 1-1, 1-2)

A literature search for articles published in *Japana Centra Revuo Medicina Web, Ver.4* and *Citation Information by The National Institute of Informatics (CiNii)* from 2000 to 2010 using the keyword “child abuse” yielded nearly 6,000 articles, but a large number of them were related to community health and medicine such as pediatrics, psychiatry, and forensic medicine, as well as social welfare. A search using the keywords “child abuse,” “school children (elementary and junior high school),” and “*Yogo* teacher” yielded 28 articles. A limited search using “*yogo* teacher responses to child abuse” yielded only three academic journal articles. Of the 28 articles found for all keywords, 11 academic journal articles involving quantitative research were relevant to this study investigating school responses to child abuse.

A chronological review of the literature revealed that the highest number of publications was in 2007 (7 articles), followed by 2009 (3 articles), and 2003 (1 article). Beginning in 2003, a study (Idei, 2003 [1]) about suspected cases of child abuse was conducted by researchers at a nursing college offering courses in *Yogo* teacher training.

### 4.2. Analysis of *Yogo* Teacher Responses to Child Abuse

Reviews and analyses of the 11 academic journal articles on school responses to child abuse generated 4 categories: “support for child abuse issue,” “calls for improvement of school organizational systems,” “workshops on child abuse,” and “informing teachers about relevant systems and laws”. The following descriptions report the details of each article within these categories. Numbers in square brackets correspond to the articles reviewed.

#### 4.2.1. Support for Child Abuse Issue

Beginning in 2003, in a review of child abuse cases detected by *Yogo* teachers, Idei [1] found that, among teachers working in schools where there were suspected cases of child abuse, 25.5% were from elementary schools and 16.7% were from junior-high schools, suggesting that elementary schools have more cases of child abuse.

Tsunoda et al. (2007) [5] reported that *Yogo*

**Table 1-1** List of Studies and Summaries Reviewed

| No   | Authors   | Titles   | Journals  | Purposes   | Methods and Subjects   |
|------|---|--|---|--|--|
| [1]  | Miehiko Idei  | Yogo Teachers' Knowledge about Health and Welfare Services in Gifu Prefecture  | Bulletin of Gifu College of Nursing, 3: 116-121, 2003   | To conduct a survey of <i>yogo</i> teachers, who are key persons in school health, and examine methods to promote cooperation between school and community health fields.  | Questionnaire<br>210 <i>yogo</i> teachers who worked in elementary and junior-high schools in Hyogo prefecture, (1) Attendance of abused children, (2) Persons to consult about child abuse, and Other.  |
| [2]  | Yoko Tanaka, Hiroshi Yokoyama, Masami Negatomo, Yumiko Fujita     | A Survey of Teachers' Perceptions about Child Abuse (3): Association Between Teachers' Standards to Identify Child Abuse and Stress in Junior High Schools                               | Bulletin of Kyushu University of Health and Welfare, 8: 23-33, 2007   | To investigate associations between teachers' perceptions about abuse, stress conditions, teachers' childhood experiences, occupational socialization experiences, and perceptions about human rights.                     | Questionnaire<br>339 teachers who worked in elementary and junior-high schools (excluding directors and <i>yogo</i> teachers), (1) Experiences of being in charge of class with abused children, (2) Knowledge about related laws and contacts, and Other.   |
| [3]  | Toshiko Fukunaka, Hideyo Goma, Reiko Tomatsu, and Yoshiko Inagaki | School Children Who Receive Improper Childrearing (Abuse) from Parents: The 1st Report, Current Conditions of Children in Elementary Schools in Hyogo Prefecture                         | The Journal of Child Health, 66: 16-21, 2007  | To investigate how schools detect child abuse along with current status of abused children.  | Questionnaire<br>Student guidance teachers who worked in 159 national and public elementary schools, (1) Current conditions of improperly treated children, (2) Signs and clues to detect abuse  |
| [4]  | Masami Negatomo, Yoko Tanaka, Hiroshi Yokoyama, and Yumiko Fujita | A Survey of Teachers' Perceptions about Child Abuse (4): Signs of Child Abuse Detected by Elementary School Teachers   | Bulletin of Kyushu University of Health and Welfare, 8: 193-202, 2007   | To identify signs of abuse that public elementary school teachers are aware of, and to examine factors related to recognizing signs of abuse.  | Questionnaire<br>220 teachers (directors, <i>yogo</i> teachers, excluding instructors) working in City A, (1) Perceptions about child abuse, (2) Criteria to identify child abuse, and Other.  |
| [5]  | Chiemi Tsumoda and Aiko Harada                                    | Responses to Child Abuse: Focusing on Yogo Teachers' Engagement  | Proceedings of the 49th Annual Conference of The Japanese Association of Educational Psychology in Tokyo, Japan (p279,2007) | To examine <i>yogo</i> teachers' involvement in child abuse and their expected responsibilities, competencies, and capabilities to respond.  | Questionnaire<br>70 <i>yogo</i> teachers, (1) <i>Yogo</i> teachers' engagement in child abuse, (2) Cases   |
| [6]  | Toshiko Fukunaka, Hideyo Goma, Reiko Tomatsu, and Yoshiko Inagaki | School Children Who Receive Improper Childrearing (Abuse) from Parents: The 2nd Report, Teachers' Perceptions about Abuse and Response Systems in Elementary Schools in Hyogo Prefecture | The Journal of Child Health, 66: 545-550, 2007  | To investigate school responses to children receiving improper childrearing, and teacher and staff awareness of laws related to child abuse.   | Questionnaire<br>Student guidance teachers who worked in 159 national and public elementary schools, (1) Internal school systems to respond to child abuse, (2) Cooperation with other organizations, and Other  |
| [7]  | Sakiko Saito and Kayoko Onishi                                    | Current Status of Discipline and Differences in Perceptions between Parents and Children: Survey Reports of 7th Graders and Their Parents  | Child Abuse and Neglect, 9: 79-86, 2007   | To conduct a survey of corporal punishment, abusive behaviors, and undesirable statements to children, and investigate differences in perceptions about discipline between parents and children.                           | Questionnaire<br>221 pairs of 8th graders and their parents in 4 junior-high schools in Amori prefecture, (1) Parents' perceptions about discipline, (2) Cases indicating possible abuse, and Other  |
| [8]  | Masashi Shibuya   | Response Systems to Child Abuse in Elementary Schools: Focusing on Knowledge Distributions about Child Abuse and Decision-Making Processes   | Journal of Health and Welfare Statistics, 54: 1-6, 2007   | To understand current conditions of knowledge about laws related to child abuse and responses in public elementary and junior-high schools.  | Questionnaire<br>Schools and teachers/staff in public elementary and junior-high schools randomly sampled from all schools across Japan (5% of the entire population), (1) Case study, (2) Survey on perceptions, and other                                  |
| [9]  | Miehiko Oio and Chie Tamimoto                                     | Responses to Child Abuse: Focusing on Relationships with <i>yogo</i> Teachers  | Ishikawa Journal of Nursing, 6: 77-83, 2009   | To understand <i>yogo</i> teachers' perceptions and experiences about child abuse, and to examine methods to detect and intervene in child abuse at an early stage in schools.   | Questionnaire<br><i>Yogo</i> teachers who worked in 237 elementary schools in Ishikawa prefecture, (1) Concerns about child abuse, (2) Experience of suspecting child abuse, and other.  |
| [10] | Toshiko Fukunaka, Hideyo Goma, Reiko Tomatsu, and Yoshiko Inagaki | School Children Who Receive Improper Childrearing (Abuse) from Parents: Current Conditions of Special Schools for Persons with Visual and Audio Disabilities                             | Psychiatra et Neurologia Paediatrica Japonica, 49: 213-219, 2009  | To conduct a survey in special schools for persons with visual and auditory disabilities to investigate school children who receive improper childrearing, and association between improper childrearing and disabilities. | Questionnaire<br><i>Yogo</i> teachers who worked in 44 special schools for persons with disabilities in Hyogo prefecture, (1) Current conditions of improperly treated children, (2) Associations between improper childrearing and disabilities, and Other. |
| [11] | Yoko Tanaka, Hiroshi Yokoyama, and Yumiko Fujita                  | A Survey of Teachers' Perceptions about Child Abuse (6): Comparisons between Parents and Teachers on Social Awareness and Child Abuse Criteria   | Bulletin of Kyushu University of Health and Welfare, 11: 9-16, 2009   | To compare social awareness and criteria of child abuse between parents and teachers, and to identify their characteristics.   | Questionnaire<br>School teachers and staff who attended workshops, (1) Perceptions about values, (2) Criteria to identify child abuse, and Other.  |

**Table 1-2** List of Studies and Summaries Reviewed

| №    | Authors   | Results   | Issues to be further addressed   | Keywords   |
|------|---|---|--|--|
| [1]  | Mechiko Idei  | (1) 25.5% of elementary schools and 16.7% of junior-high schools reported that they had children who were possibly abused, (2) Persons with whom teachers consulted were often managerial-level staff, followed by student guidance teachers in schools, and child guidance centers as external organizations.  | Yogo teachers' specific competencies to detect child abuse at an early stage and respond to it are not identified yet.   | Yogo teacher, detecting child abuse at an early stage  |
| [2]  | Yoko Tanaka, Hiroshi Yokoyama, Masami Negatomo, Yumiko Fujita     | (1) 62% of teachers did not have any experience of being in charge of a class with abused or possibly abused children, (2) Less than 30% of teachers were aware of laws on child abuse prevention, (3) 60% of schools did not have adequate internal systems to respond to child abuse, (4) 90% of teachers strongly felt it was difficult to deal with families.   | (1) For teachers who have never had the experience of being a homeroom teacher in classes with abused children, workshops are necessary as alternatives, (2) Workshops should cover not only types of abuse but also internal school systems, other relevant organizations, basic knowledge about social welfare, and particularly, treatment for abused children, (3) Standardized criteria to identify child abuse are needed. | Child abuse, stress, teacher   |
| [3]  | Toshiko Fukunoka, Hideyo Goma, Reiko Tomatsu, and Yoshiko Inagaki | (1) Schools with children who were improperly treated comprised 53.4% of the entire sample, (2) The most frequently reported was neglect, followed by psychological, physical, and sexual issues, (3) The most frequently reported sign for detection was "the concerned person's words" followed by "the concerned person's behaviors."  | (1) Even if some cases do not look urgent, they often involve serious abuse; therefore, having school council meetings and cooperation with other organizations is essential, (2) We should examine optional workshops to encourage teachers and staff to detect children who are improperly treated.  | Abuse, improper childrearing, school   |
| [4]  | Masami Negatomo, Yoko Tanaka, Hiroshi Yokoyama, and Yumiko Fujita | (1) Teachers who had more than 1 previous experience to be engaged in responding to abused children as homeroom teachers comprised 40.1% of the entire sample, and those with more than 2 experiences comprised 15.8%, (2) No significant differences were observed by year of working, (3) Signs of abuse varied from noticeable behaviors to social relationships, (4) Behavioral problems, such as "unable to focus in class", deviated from the image of abuse.   | (1) Deepening teachers' understanding about possibility of child abuse hidden in troubled behaviors is necessary, (2) We should examine effects of using school counselors and social workers to detect and manage child abuse.  | Signs of child abuse, teacher, elementary school   |
| [5]  | Chiemi Tsunoda and Aiko Harada                                    | (1) 32.1% of yogo teachers in elementary schools and 32.6% of those in junior-high schools reported they had been involved in child abuse cases, (2) Child abuse workshop attendees detected child abuse four times more than non attendees, (3) Many yogo teachers thought that counseling and communication skills are important to detect and respond to child abuse.  | (1) Internal and external cooperation is essential to respond to child abuse in schools, (2) Workshops are necessary for early-stage detection of child abuse.   | Yogo teacher, child abuse, health counseling, cooperation  |
| [6]  | Toshiko Fukunoka, Hideyo Goma, Reiko Tomatsu, and Yoshiko Inagaki | (1) 86.4% teachers reported that their schools had internal systems to respond to child abuse, (2) Main members (around 6 to 12 persons) of the systems were managerial-level staff, yogo teachers, student guidance teachers, head grade teachers, and homeroom teachers, (3) 84.4% teachers reported a child guidance center as an organization they had cooperated with, (4) 93.2% of teachers were aware of obligatory reporting, and 88.6% agreed with necessity of attending child abuse workshops.           | (1) Central persons who are in charge of responses to child abuse should acquire knowledge about cooperation with related organizations, (2) Improving workshops and building comprehensive systems involved with health and welfare policies are necessary.   | Improper childrearing, abuse, school, response system, cooperation, awareness of laws              |
| [7]  | Sakiko Saito and Kayoko Onishi                                    | (1) Significant differences in physical conduct were observed between students (who reported having been hit) and parents (who reported having hit), which suggested that children perceived being hit while parents did not think they hit, (2) For mental conduct, half of the students reported that they were hurt by parents' sharp words, (3) Parents' words sometimes hurt children's feeling more seriously than corporal punishment.   | We should look at a more expansive range of ages and locations beyond the junior-high school period, and examine the current status of discipline and effects.   | Discipline, child abuse  |
| [8]  | Masashi Shibuya   | (1) Principals and vice principals were likely to have more knowledge about responses to child abuse, and they had power to make decisions on responses, (2) School internal team systems and lack of technical knowledge may lead to unstable responses in schools.  | (1) All teachers and staff should have opportunities to attend workshops, (2) Establishing an on-call child-abuse expert system is needed, (3) Schools should respond to child abuse as a team.  | Child abuse, response system, elementary and junior-high school                                    |
| [9]  | Mechiko Oio and Che Tanimoto                                      | (1) Almost all yogo teachers had concerns about child abuse, (2) 69.1% reported that they had experience of suspecting child abuse, (3) Difficulties yogo teachers found in involvement with potential child abuse cases were "responses" and "cooperation with other organizations and within schools," (4) 80% of yogo teachers are aware of their responsibility to detect child abuse at an early stage.  | (1) Cooperation with other professionals within schools and external organizations, and improving communication systems, (2) Implementing multiple assignments of yogo teachers and school counselors is necessary.  | Child abuse, yogo teacher, prevention, intervention  |
| [10] | Toshiko Fukunoka, Hideyo Goma, Reiko Tomatsu, and Yoshiko Inagaki | (1) Schools with children who met criteria comprised 71% of the sample, (2) Neglect was the most frequently reported case of improper childrearing (64.5%) followed by psychological, physical, and sexual issues, (3) About factors related to disabilities, "difficulty in taking care of," "difficulty in communication," and "repeating the same mistakes and unable to learn" were reported as children's issues, and "heavy parental burden" and "mental anxiety about disabilities" as parental side issues. | Support with preventive measures against child abuse is needed for families with disabled children.  | Abuse, improper childrearing, child with a disability, special school for people with disabilities |
| [11] | Yoko Tanaka, Hiroshi Yokoyama, and Yumiko Fujita                  | (1) Differences between parents and teachers were: perceptions about child's rights, and perceptions about family, (2) Understanding each other and discussing what to do together are important.   | Preventive measures against abuse should be discussed and implemented in communities.  | Child abuse, one's view of life, identifying abuse   |

teachers who experienced dealing with suspected cases of child abuse comprised about 70% of their sample, and Oto et al. (2009) [9] found that 69.1% of their sample were *Yogo* teachers reporting involvement in suspected child abuse cases. Thus, *Yogo* teachers are more likely to be involved in such cases than other teachers and staff.

In terms of teacher and staff concerns and perceptions about their roles, Shibuya (2007) [8] reported that 85.7% of elementary school teachers and 79.5% of junior-high school teachers in his study were aware of the legal stipulation that “staff and organizations related to social welfare for children should strive for early detection of child abuse.” Oto et al. (2009) [9] stated that most *Yogo* teachers in their study were highly concerned about child abuse and aware of their responsibility for early detection, indicating the strong concerns exist about child abuse within schools.

Tsunoda et al. (2007) [5], investigating signs of child abuse for detection, reported that child abuse cases detected by *Yogo* teachers in schools were likely to involve physical abuse and neglect. This is because wounds and behavioral changes are thought to be most noticeable. However, wounds and bruises resulting from abuse often occur on parts of the body or head that are covered, so *Yogo* teachers, who need to observe and touch children's bodies when they visit school health rooms for illness or injuries, have an advantage in finding hidden signs.

Nagatomo et al. (2007) [4] reported that, in many cases, the signs of suspected child abuse that teachers detected were “unnatural things in daily life” such as “unnatural wounds on children's bodies,” “dirty clothing,” and “children's cruel behavior to other living creatures.” They also reported that teachers often did not suspect child abuse from abnormal behaviors such as “children's obsession with eating or no appetite” or “lack of concentration in class,” because teachers did not regard them as signs of abuse.

In regard to parents, Nagatomo et al. (2007) [4] found that while most teachers suspected child abuse based on “parental violent behaviors,” many teachers did not regard “being unable to contact parents” or “parental refusal to see teachers” as potential signs of abuse. While both general teachers and *Yogo* teachers regarded physical abnormalities such as wounds and untidy dress or hair as signs of potential abuse, caution levels clearly differed between them. General teachers did not regard children's “obsession with

eating or no appetite” as a sign, but *Yogo* teachers did and also noted this alongside inadequate physical growth and lack of care including “not eating well.” On the other hand, concerning “unnatural things in daily life,” homeroom teachers were more likely to regard these as signs of abuse compared to *Yogo* teachers, and to suspect and detect cases when these signs were observed (Fukuoka et al. (2007a) [3]).

Additionally, concerning perceived difficulties in responses to child abuse, Oto et al. (2009) [9] stated that the most frequently reported issue that *Yogo* teachers found difficult to handle was “interaction with parents,” followed by “identifying an abuse case,” “level of intervention in family issues,” “cooperation with other organizations,” and “internal cooperation within schools.” Fukuoka et al. (2007a) [3] and Fukuoka et al. (2009) [10] reported that teachers found “possible risk of upsetting trusted relationships with parents” and “proper level of intervention given individual privacy” were difficult issues when responding to child abuse. Nagatomo et al. (2007) [4] also found that 90% of teachers in their study found it difficult to identify individual cases as abuse, and Tanaka et al. (2007) [2] and Saito et al. (2007) [7] reported that many junior-high school teachers had difficulty dealing with problematic families. These findings indicate that dealing with parents and guardians in instances of child abuse is challenging.

However, Tsunoda et al. (2007) [5] reported on elements of cases that *Yogo* teachers felt were handled successfully. These included “working as a team rather than leaving the homeroom teacher to deal with everything,” “being able to talk at length in the school health room,” and “having close association with relevant organizations for when the school is unable to handle child abuse situations.” Given the increasing expectations placed on *Yogo* teachers to detect child abuse cases at early stages, respond to them, and provide support, *Yogo* teachers in these studies found that organization-wide approaches to managing child abuse was very effective and enabled them to use their own expertise to maximal advantage.

#### **4.2.2. Calls for Improvement of School Organizational Systems**

Fukuoka et al. (2007b) [6] reported that 86.4% of schools in their sample had an internal system for responding to child abuse, and that most were

managed by student discipline committees or committees/departments in charge of student lifestyle guidance. Shibuya (2007) [8] reported that in cases of suspected child abuse in elementary schools, staff consulted the principal (60.3%), vice-principal (46.7%), and *Yogo* teachers (24.4%). In junior high schools, staff consulted grade level head teachers (49.2%), principals (38.5%), vice-principals (35.8%), heads of student discipline (35%), and *Yogo* teachers (16%). Similarly, Idei (2003) [1] reported that *Yogo* teachers consulted school management in the order of principals and vice-principals, heads of student discipline, homeroom teachers, and grade level head teachers.

With respect to cooperation with external organizations, Shibuya (2007) [8] found in a study of schools across Japan that 72.7% of elementary schools and 81.8% of junior-high schools reported cooperating with child guidance centers, municipal social welfare offices, and community centers. Fukuoka et al. (2007b) [6] reported in a study of a survey conducted in Hyogo prefecture that 36.4% of schools cooperated with other organizations in order to help children who were inadequately treated, and the organizations with whom they worked were child guidance centers (84.4%), school boards (59%), social welfare offices (56.3%), social workers and child councils (40.6%), and head child councils (25%) (Multiple answers allowed).

The above findings demonstrate that *Yogo* teachers are indeed consulted when school personnel encounter children they suspect are victims of abuse. The findings further indicate that practically all schools have internal systems for responding to child abuse, and that schools chose to be affiliated with boards of education and child guidance centers in an effort to establish relationships with outside institutions.

#### 4.2.3. Workshops on Child Abuse

Tsunoda et al. (2007) [5], in a study of associations between teachers' and *Yogo* teachers' opportunities to learn about child abuse (hereafter referred to as workshops) and their awareness and knowledge of the subject, reported that *Yogo* teachers who attended child abuse workshops were four times more likely to detect child abuse than those without workshop experience. This suggests the positive effects of these workshops on teacher capabilities to detect child abuse. Nagatomo et al. (2007) [4] investigated associations between teachers' workshop attendance,

detection of child abuse signs, and perceptions about the prevention of child abuse, and found that workshop attendance was associated with certain aspects of child abuse detection.

Shibuya (2007) [8] compared professionals with higher levels of knowledge about child abuse such as principals, vice principals, and *Yogo* teachers with those with lower levels of knowledge such as grade level head teachers and homeroom teachers on their likelihood of attending workshops, and found that professionals with higher levels of knowledge were more likely to secure opportunities to attend workshops. Shibuya also demonstrated that while 70% of professionals with a higher likelihood of attending workshops, such as principals and vice principals, responded that they "always reported child abuse cases," less than half of grade level head teachers, homeroom teachers, and *Yogo* teachers answered that they did so, adding that they usually "only reported cases depending on the situation."

Tanaka et al. (2009) [11] found that more than half of junior-high school teachers in their sample had never attended a workshop on child abuse, and that those who had attended one were more likely to connect the presence of abuse to questionable occurrences or abnormalities in daily life, such as "unusual events or behaviors," "abnormalities in social relationships," "isolated families," and "violent behaviors of parents." On the basis of this, Tanaka et al. (2007) [2] proposed that instruction on child abuse in university teacher-training courses would be partially effective in helping teachers determine the presence of abuse.

Tsunoda et al. (2007) [5] examined workshops for *Yogo* teachers and found the following content important: detecting child abuse from developmental disorders and misconduct, cooperation with particular organizations, internal cooperation within a school, and judging cases where further responses beyond school functions are required. Adding to the details of child abuse management, Tsunoda et al. (2007) [5] also noted the following content to be important for the workshops: information about internal organization in the school, other relevant organizations, how to assure basic social welfare, specific knowledge of treatment for abused children, and the functions of other professionals and organizations.

These reports indicate that attendance at workshops on child abuse is a large determinant in whether teachers are capable of detecting abuse.

#### 4.2.4. “Informing teachers of relevant systems and laws”

Fukuoka et al. (2007b) [6], in a study on awareness of child abuse, found that 93.2% of elementary school teachers in their study were aware of mandatory reporting; 53.4% knew that both social welfare offices and child guidance centers could receive the child abuse reports, and 35.2% thought only child guidance centers were able to receive the reports. They also reported that 92% were aware of “an obligation to make efforts to detect child abuse at an early stage” in the Child Abuse Prevention Law. According to Shibuya (2007) [8], 85.7% of teachers and staff in elementary schools and 79.5% in junior-high schools in their study were aware of such obligation.

However, while levels of awareness were higher among principals, vice principals, and *Yogo* teachers, awareness among grade level head teachers and homeroom teachers was low. In particular, Shibuya (2007)[8] found that more than half of grade level head teachers in junior-high schools were unaware of two items: “being allowed to report even if only a possible abuse case” and “a report can be made in person or by phone.”

These findings indicate that most school personnel are aware of their obligation to work towards early detection of abuse, and that the degree of awareness differs between elementary and junior high school staff.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1. A chronological review of the literature

A chronological review of the literature revealed that the highest number of publications was in 2007 (7 articles), followed by 2009 (3 articles), and 2003 (1 article). The amendment of 2004, and increased social awareness at schools that year about the mandatory reporting of child abuse are thought to be behind the high number of publications from 2007 onwards. Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology provides dedicated *Guidelines for Yogo Teachers on Child Abuse* and encourages them to play an important role in early detection and response to child abuse (The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2007).

In 2007 and 2010, the Japanese government intervened and created a manual as part of the population approach (The Ministry of Education,

Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2007; The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2010). It is of great significance.

However, the Child Abuse Prevention Law has been repeatedly amended since its enactment in 2000, the number of reported child abuse cases is still rising. Child abuse is an extremely serious issue that needs to be urgently addressed in schools.

The 11 academic journal articles reviewed in this study were all quantitative, not qualitative studies. We need how to identify the abuse and abuse detection. Have a proactive point of view, so *Yogo* teachers can promote the support of child abuse, there is urgent need to consider the way of concrete assistance.

### 5.2. The handling of child abuse by *Yogo* teachers

This study reviewed 11 academic journal articles about elementary and junior-high school responses to child abuse, and found that only a limited number of studies that have investigated child abuse issues have had school teachers and staff as study subjects, and in particular, we found only three academic journal articles that included *Yogo* teachers as study subjects.

The research themes of these studies were experiences of finding child abuse cases and clues to detection, difficulties in responding to cases, presence/absence of internal systems to respond to child abuse and other relevant organizations, effects of child abuse workshops, and awareness of legal systems.

A 2007 survey of child abuse cases detected in schools revealed that 32.1% of elementary school teachers, 32.6% of junior-high school teachers, and 57% of *Yogo* teachers had reported cases in the past (The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2007). Tsunoda et al. (2007) [5] and Oto et al. (2009) [9] reported that *Yogo* teachers who experienced dealing with suspected cases of child abuse comprised about 70% of their sample. Thus, *Yogo* teachers are more likely to be involved in such cases than other teachers and staff.

#### [Suspicious signs of child abuse]

In terms of suspicious signs of child abuse, the survey results showed that possible signs of child abuse used by the teachers included lack of care, such as “not eating well” and “dirty clothing,” and inadequate physical growth, along with abnormal appearance such as wounds and untidy dress. These

findings speak to the importance of regular teachers, as well as *Yogo* teachers, using their unique qualities in watching over children from multiple perspectives as part of the first step in responding to early detection of child abuse.

However, both *Yogo* teachers and general teachers pointed out that their prior “relationships with parents” and questions around “identifying child abuse” made it difficult to respond appropriately to child abuse. Abused children rarely tell anyone about their abuse; rather they often have various physical and behavioral signs, including visits to school health rooms for wounds they received while at home, being obsessed with food during school lunch time, and lacking concentration in class (The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2007).

In addition, each child has their own style and pattern of signs. Therefore, when teachers have suspicions of child abuse, in order to respond to each case comprehensively, they should integrate all of their observations, assess information expansively, and make a decision at an institutional level with mutual understanding across professionals with different expertise (Morita, 2004; Shibasaki, 2006; Tamai, 2007).

Whether *Yogo* teachers are clearly regarded as important members of internal school response systems and what responsibilities they have has not been made clear in previous studies.

### **[Cooperation with other professionals]**

Schools also need to cooperate with other healthcare teams and psychology professionals, including school physicians, school dentists, and school counselors. School teachers and staff members should accept and seek advice about children's behaviors from other third parties, when considering the possibility of child abuse and making decisions about appropriate responses (Kawasaki, 2006).

However, past studies do not provide adequate insights about whether the aforementioned professionals are members of schools' internal response systems, whether they are called only if necessary, how they are involved in cooperation, and who is in charge of coordination (Idei, 2003 [1]; Tsunoda et al., 2007 [5]; Oto et al., 2009 [9]). This requires further study.

In their study of internal school response systems, Fukuoka et al. (2007b) [6] reported that 86.4% of

schools had some response system in place, although details of the systems were not revealed. Because most school personnel are aware of their obligation in working to detect abuse early, specific responses to abuse need to occur from the heart of pre-existing internal systems.

Furthermore, relationships with relevant organizations in the community, beginning with child guidance centers and boards of education, should be actively promoted.

### **[Workshop needs and program]**

The findings of these studies also demonstrate the obvious positive effects of attendance at child abuse workshops, suggesting that the capacity to detect child abuse largely depends on such attendance. Interest in child abuse workshops is increasing rapidly in educational environments (Tamai, 2007), but none of the existing studies have examined in detail workshop programs that may be needed to address the two difficulties reported in responding to child abuse, namely “relationships with parents” and “identifying child abuse.” The development of training programs is urgently required for *Yogo* teachers and school personnel. Programs should be appropriately organized according to the developmental stages of students and should meet the needs of *Yogo* teachers and other school personnel. Additionally, the development of specific forms of assistance that work to maintain family functioning need to be further examined (Tsuruno, 2003).

### **[Before the legislation 2000]**

Before the development of child abuse legislation 2000, schools and *Yogo* teachers had traditionally supported the growth and development of individual children in ways that met the particular circumstances of the children and their families. However, now issues of quality of life (QOL) infringement stifle the personal good will of *Yogo* teachers.

Research finally began in 2003 on the hardships of *Yogo* teachers serving as counselors for such children and providing support behind closed doors. Advocacy for *Yogo* teacher positions and work conditions began at this time as well, with the bold decision of university research faculty in attempting to shed new light on the matter. This research and advocacy was conducted by a small number of universities.

### [After the government manual]

In 2007, the Japanese government intervened and created a manual as part of the population approach (The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2007). This has great significance because it means that the hidden support and personal good will of *Yogo* teachers will be acknowledged and that future research on *Yogo* teachers is more likely. This study will be valuable as a foundation for future research on assistance provided by *Yogo* teachers in counteracting child abuse.

### 5.3. Limitations of the present study

A literature review was conducted using the keywords “child abuse,” “school children (elementary and junior high school)” and “*Yogo* teacher” in reference to child abuse for the years 2000 to 2010, following enactment of the Child Abuse Prevention Law. The 11 academic journal articles from this search became the study sample, from which a summary discussion was developed. Generalization of the study’s findings is limited since the spirit of the research was centered exclusively on child abuse, but even so, the general framework does not diverge much from national survey data.

Although case studies, short reports, theoretical papers, and journal reports can provide valuable data, the perspectives and values of researchers make objectivity in analysis difficult. Thus, such works were excluded from the present study and only academic journal articles were reviewed. That only 11 academic journal articles were reviewed, a mere 0.2% of the 6,000 articles related to child abuse, may be representational of the burden placed on those involved in the child abuse issue. Future studies should gather practical evidence of this burden through qualitative research such as case studies.

## 6. Conclusion and future issues to be addressed

In this study, we reviewed previous studies on *Yogo* teachers' responses to child abuse published in the decade following the enactment of the Japanese Child Abuse Prevention Law, and identified research trends and issues that need to be addressed.

Eleven academic journal articles were retrieved and generated four general types of responses: “support for child abuse issue,” “calls for improvement of

school organizational systems,” “workshops about child abuse,” and “informing teachers about relevant systems and laws”.

The results demonstrated that *Yogo* teachers were often in positions where child abuse could be detected at an early stage, and in many cases they were practically involved.

Future efforts should also be made to clarify the role of *Yogo* teachers within internal school response systems. In addition, given that the Ministry of Education report that it is difficult to respond to parents and that over 80% of child abuse perpetrators are biological mothers and fathers (The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2007), special investigations on the expert-team support involving families should be conducted with *Yogo* teachers.

The 11 academic journal articles reviewed in this study were all quantitative, not qualitative studies. We need how to identify the abuse and abuse detection. There are also only a limited number of studies about *Yogo* teachers in general. This report will be valuable as a foundation for future research on assistance provided by *Yogo* teachers in counteracting child abuse.

In light of this, qualitative practical research such as case studies and organization-wide research should be conducted and revisions made to guidelines and manuals on child abuse issued by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. Environments need to be created that encourage *Yogo* teachers and school personnel to participate in research pertaining to overcoming and preventing child abuse. This may require aid from supporting colleges of education, conferences, academic organizations, and public education, as well as assurances that the aforementioned research activities will be conducted.

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