

Optimus Study

Global

The Optimus Study is a cross-national project on child sexual abuse (CSA) in the context of other forms of maltreatment. Its goal is to inform policy and interventions.



Project Overview

Partner	University of Zurich and University of Hong Kong
Focus	Child protection
Initiative period	2007 to 2017
Initiative history	In 2007, UBSOF gathered a group of international experts ("Advisory Board") to conceptualize and plan the study. The research teams in Switzerland and China conducted a pilot study in 2008. The full study began in 2009; initial results are expected in 2011.
Initiative budget	CHF 3,420,000 (cycle 1)
Beneficiaries	The existence of reliable, evidence-based data on CSA will help galvanize political action on the issue. Agencies will be empowered to develop and implement evidence-based intervention and prevention measures, and will have a more solid footing on which to base their arguments and raise funds. Over the long-term, this will dramatically improve the lives of millions of affected children.

Project Summary

Context

In order to develop measures that will successfully protect children from abuse and establish an optimized support system, we need more information about the risk factors and protective factors surrounding victimization and child sexual abuse. In response to the often uncoordinated efforts in the field, the lack of clarity surrounding relevant terminology, and the dearth of reliable and representative scientific data, the UBS Optimus foundation has initiated a multi-national research project on child sexual abuse.

Project

Currently, large studies are being conducted in Switzerland and China, and plans are in place to add further countries in the near future. The studies will be comparable between the countries and facilitate identification of cultural variation surrounding the issue. In each country, a representative sample of around 6,000 youths between the ages of 14 and 17 are visited and surveyed at school and asked how often and in what context they may have experienced sexual abuse. The questionnaire is structured in a way that places child sexual abuse in the context of other forms of abuse, such as neglect or physical or psychological abuse. Further, in each country, institutions involved in child protection are surveyed in order to gain an overview of the options available to children and young people affected by sexual abuse as well as to tally the number of cases reported each year and learn more about how the different institutions collaborate.

Expected results

- Build an evidence base for the development of intervention and prevention strategies
- Raise awareness and galvanize political action surrounding child sexual abuse
- Contribute to improving the methodology in the area of child sexual abuse, for example, by clarifying survey designs and contributing to the establishment of cross-nationally suitable definitions of child sexual abuse.
- CSA

UBS Optimus Foundation
Augustinerhof 1, P.O. Box, CH-8089 Zurich
Tel. +41-44-237 27 87
sh-ubs-optimus-foundation@ubs.com

www.ubs.com/optimus