Though the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations aim to end all forms of violence against minors, child maltreatment remains a globally prevalent phenomenon. Despite the fact that parents in numerous countries apply violent discipline methods to control children's behavior, little is known about the prevalence of maltreatment and violent discipline in Sub-Saharan Africa. In this study, we examined the prevalence of maltreatment and violent discipline from both the adolescents' and parents' perspectives. In addition, we explored risk factors that could be associated with violent discipline by parents. We administered questionnaires to a nationally representative sample of 700 Tanzanian secondary school students (52% girls, mean age: 14.92 years, SD = 1.02, range: 12–17) and 333 parents or primary guardians (53% females; mean age: of 43.47 years, SD = 9.02, range: 19–71). More than 90% of all students reported exposure to violent discipline by a parent within the past year. Concurrently, more than (80%) of parents acknowledged using violent discipline techniques. Using a path model, we found that violent discipline by parents was associated with parental stress. Other risk factors contributed to a higher stress level but were not directly linked to maltreatment. Our findings indicate high levels of violent discipline in Tanzanian families. There is a pressing need to design and implement interventions that prevent children from experiencing violence at home. Reducing parents' stress levels may be a starting point for intervention. Yet, due to the high levels of violent discipline, societal beliefs also need to be considered.

Keywords: prevalence; child maltreatment; harsh discipline; family violence, Sub-Saharan Africa; Tanzania