

JOURNAL HIGHLIGHTS

—by Susan Kelley and Thomas Curran

PHYSICAL ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Benedict, M., White, R.B., Wulff, L.M. and Hall, B.J. (1990) Reported maltreatment in children with multiple disabilities. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 14, 207-217.

Five hundred multiply disabled children seen over a two-year period were studied to determine whether their functional or developmental status was associated with child abuse reporting. While there appeared to be no such association involving the most severely disabled children, marginally functioning children were found to be at greater risk for abuse and abuse reporting. Important questions regarding the identification of abuse in developmentally disabled children are raised. (SJK)

Briere, J. and Runtz, M. (1990) Differential adult symptomatology associated with three types of child abuse histories. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 14, 357-364.

This study examined 277 female undergraduate students' retrospective reports of childhood sexual, physical, and psychological abuse as they related to current psychosocial dysfunction. Childhood history of psychological abuse was determined to be associated with low self-esteem, physical abuse was associated with aggression, and sexual abuse was related to maladaptive sexual behavior. Implications of the findings are discussed. (SJK)

Dietrich, D., Berkowitz, L., Kadushin, A. and McGloing, J. (1990) Some factors influencing abusers' justification of their child abuse. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 14, 337-345.

This article describes interviews which were conducted with abusive caretakers to determine under what circumstances they justified their abusive behaviors. The authors present a fascinating look at various factors which potentially contribute to child abuse, including the use of corporal punishment, certain child characteristics, and personal stress such as job or money problems. (TFC)

Finkelhor, D. (1990) Is child abuse over-reported? The data rebut arguments for less intervention. *Public Welfare*, 48 (1), 22-29, 46-47.

This article, based on a carefully-prepared analysis of the 1986 *National Incidence Study*, presents a sound rebuttal to recent allegations that substantiated child abuse cases have decreased recently and that most such cases are only "minor" instances of neglect or excessive corporal punishment. The author demonstrates that, in fact, substantiated cases of child abuse increased in number and severity from 1980 to 1986. With important practice and policy implications, this article should be read by all child protection professionals. (TFC)

Johnson, C.F. (1990) Inflicted injury versus accidental injury. *Pediatric Clinics of North America*, 37 (4), 791-814.

This article presents excellent information for distinguishing between accidental and non-accidental injuries. Important issues such as religious and cultural practices versus child abuse are discussed. Indicators of satanic ritualistic abuse of children are presented. (SJK)

Margolin, L. (1990) Child abuse by baby-sitters: An ecological-interactional interpretation. *J of Family Violence*, 5 (2), 95-105.

This article examines the social contexts in which physical abuse was committed by non-parental caregivers. After citing important distinctions between parental and non-parental motivations to abuse children, a sample of 98 "founded" baby-sitter abuse cases is analyzed. Noteworthy among the study's findings was the large percentage of cases in which parents supported or encouraged their baby-sitters to use violent action when disciplining their children. (TFC)

Reece, R.M. (1990) Unusual manifestations of child abuse. *Pediatric Clinics of North America*, 37 (4), 905-921.

This article describes several atypical presentations of child maltreatment. Unusual forms of child abuse discussed include microwave oven burns, thirsting and hypernatremic dehydration, cocaine ingestion, tin ear syndrome, and Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy. (SJK)

Wiehe, V.R. (1990) Religious influence on parental attitude toward the use of corporal punishment. *J Family Violence*, 5 (2), 173-186.

This interesting article discusses research conducted in several of the "Bible Belt" states to determine if persons affiliated with religious denominations which stressed a literal interpretation of the Bible were more likely to exercise corporal punishment. Statistically significant differences in attitudes regarding corporal punishment were found between those denominations holding a literal belief in the Bible compared to their nonliteral counterparts. The importance of considering the social context of abusive parents, including their religious belief, is discussed as an essential part of intervention in child abuse cases. (TFC)

SEXUAL ABUSE

Burgess, A.W., Hartman, C.R., Kelley, S.J., Grant, C.A., and Gray, E.B. (1990) Parental response to child sexual abuse trials involving day care settings. *J. Traumatic Stress*, 3 (3), 395-405.

This study examined the stress response of parents to whether or not their child testified in a sexual abuse trial against defendants from a day care center. Parents completed a questionnaire and the SCL-90-R, Impact of Events Scale, and Life Events Survey. Parents of 17 testifying children presented higher symptoms of psychological distress than parents of 50 non-testifying children sexually abused in day care centers. In addition, the reported stress was higher in fathers than in mothers. (SJK)

Gordon, B.N., Schoeder, C.S., and Abrams, J.M. (1990) Children's knowledge of sexuality: A comparison of sexually abused and non-abused children. *Am.J Orthopsychiatry*, 60 (2), 250-257.

Samples of sexually abused and non-abused children, carefully matched for age and social class, were compared for knowledge of various aspects of sexuality. Although the total sample size was relatively small, no difference was found between the two groups in their knowledge of adult sexual behavior, body parts or abuse prevention skills. In addition, no evidence of precocious sexual knowledge was found in the abused children. (TFC)

Heger, A., and Emans, S.J. (1990) Introital diameter as the criterion for sexual abuse. *Pediatrics*, 85 (2), 222-223.

This editorial presents an excellent commentary on the present medical utility of the diameter of the hymenal opening in recognizing and diagnosing child sexual abuse. Medical and non-medical professionals involved in the initial assessment of sexual abuse cases should be familiar with this article's important points. (TFC)

McCann, J., Voris, J., Simon, M., and Wells, R. (1990). Comparison of genital examination techniques in prepubertal girls. *Pediatrics*, 85 (2), 182-187.

The results of three separate methods used to examine prepubertal girls are compared and a technique for measuring hymenal orifice diameters is presented. The knee-chest position and the supine traction method were found to be superior to the supine separation technique in opening the vaginal introitus. Other important findings and their clinical implications are presented. (SJK)

Powell, L., and Faherty, S. (1990). Treating sexually abused latency age girls. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 17, 35-47.

This article presents a twenty-session treatment plan for sexually abused latency aged females utilizing group process and creative arts therapies. The goals and activities for each session are clearly outlined. Guidelines for screening group members and organizing the group are presented. (SJK)

Tharinger, D., Horton, C.B., and Millea, S. (1990) Sexual abuse and exploitation of children and adults with mental retardation and other handicaps. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 14, 301-312.

An excellent overview of the policy, intervention and treatment issues unique to sexually abused children and adults who are developmentally disabled. Several reasons why developmentally disabled children are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse are outlined. All who work with sexually abused children and developmentally disabled children should read this insightful article. (TFC)

Thoennes, N. and Tjaden, P.G. (1990). The extent, nature and validity of sexual abuse allegations in custody/visitation disputes. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 14, 151-163.

This article summarizes the findings of a two-year study of the incidence and validity of child sexual abuse allegations arising out of custody or visitation disputes. The findings indicated that sexual abuse allegations in such disputes appear to be rare, arising in less than 2% of the cases examined in this nationwide study. Also, this study's findings indicate that false sexual abuse allegations are not disproportionately high in custody/visitation cases. (TFC)

SEX OFFENDERS

Duthie, B., and McIvor, D.L. (1990). A new system for cluster-coding child molester MMPI profile types. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 17 (2), 199-214.

This article reports the findings of a study to determine the usefulness of the MMPI in classifying child molesters. An analysis of 90 child molester MMPI profiles produced eight MMPI cluster types. Descriptions for each of the cluster types are presented. (SJK)

SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND CHILD MALTREATMENT

Bays, J. (1990) Substance abuse and child abuse: Impact of addiction on the child. *Pediatric Clinics of North America*, 37 (4), 881-904.

This article provides an overview of the current epidemic of substance abuse in the U.S. and its relationship to child abuse and neglect. The effects of exposure to alcoholism and drugs before and after birth are described. Factors that increase the risk of child maltreatment in addicted households are discussed. The article offers a thorough overview and review of the literature, as well as important recommendations for intervention. (SJK)

Day, N.L., Richardson, G., Robles, N., Sambamoorthi, U., Taylor, P., Scher, M., Stoffer, D., Jasperse, D., and Corenelius, M. (1990). Effects of prenatal alcohol exposure on growth and morphology of offspring at 8 months of age. *Pediatrics*, 85 (5), 748-752

In this prospective study of alcohol and other substance use during pregnancy, subjects were interviewed at each trimester of pregnancy and again when the offspring were 8 months of age. Alcohol use during pregnancy was significantly related to lower weight, length, and head circumference in the exposed infants at the follow-up observation. A significant increase in the risk of minor physical anomalies and fetal alcohol effects was also predicted by prenatal alcohol exposure. (SJK)

Heagarty, M. (1990). Crack cocaine: A new danger for children. *Am.J. of Diseases of Children*, (144), 756-757.

This editorial provides an overview of the impact of the crack cocaine epidemic on children, families and communities. The effects of cocaine exposure on children and the child protective service system are outlined. (SJK)

Thomas, J.N. (1989-1990). Drug abuse and child maltreatment. *Protecting Children*, 6 (4), 4-8.

This article, in the American Humane Association Quarterly (Denver), addresses the key policy and prevention issues surrounding the now common problem of drug abuse and child maltreatment. The article provides a detailed yet concise summary of how drug abuse has affected child abuse and child protective services. (TFC)

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