

# JOURNAL HIGHLIGHTS

—by Thomas Curran

The purpose of *Journal Highlights* is to alert readers and APSAC members to current literature and research on child maltreatment. Selected articles from journals representing APSAC's multidisciplinary membership are presented in the form of an annotated bibliography. Readers are encouraged to send copies of current articles they believe would benefit *Advisor* readers, accompanied by two to three-sentence summary of the article. Mail your contributions to Thomas F. Curran, MSW, LISW, Executive Director, Children's Advocacy Center, 4000 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104.

## PHYSICAL ABUSE AND NEGLECT

**Alexander, R., Smith, W. and Stevenson, R. (1990).** Serial Munchausen Syndrome by proxy *Pediatrics*, 86 (4), 581-585.

This article outlines five cases of Munchausen Syndrome by proxy (MSBP) in which more than one child in the family was victimized. Interesting patterns of this recently-observed type of MSBP are described, including the serial perpetrators' increased psychopathology and likelihood of killing their children compared to mothers in non-serial MSBP cases. (TFC)

**Alexander, R., Sato, Y., Smith, W. and Bennett, T. (1990).** Incidence of impact trauma with cranial injuries ascribed to shaking. *Am. J. of Diseases in Children*, 144 (6), 724-726.

This study presents data from 24 infants initially diagnosed as having Shaken Baby Syndrome, half of whom showed no visible evidence of direct impact or external trauma. The findings suggest that shaking by itself is sufficient to cause severe or fatal intracranial injury. (MC)

**Briere, J. and Runtz, M. (1990).** Differential adult symptomatology associated with three types of child abuse histories. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 14 (3), 357-364.

Using a specially designed Family Experiences Questionnaire with a sample of 277 female college students, this study examined retrospective reports of childhood sexual, physical and psychological abuse as they related to three types of current psychological dysfunction. Significant findings revealed unique associations between a history of psychological abuse and low self-esteem, childhood physical abuse and adult aggression towards others, and child sexual victimization and maladaptive sexual behaviors. (TFC)

**Cantrell, P.J., Carrico, M.F., Franklin, J.N., Grubb, H.J. (1990).** Violent tactics in family conflict relative to familial and economic factors. *Psychological Reports*, 66, 823-828.

This study examined the social, economic, and family process factors which may be associated with families' use of violent tactics in conflicts in a population in the Appalachian region of West Virginia. Subjects studied, utilizing a questionnaire format, were 114 boys and 161 girls ranging in age from 15 to 17. The researchers state confirmation of their primary hypothesis that in families where the father is unemployed, there is greater than expected frequency of violent interactions. Additional findings indicated that violent behaviors are replicated intergenerationally. (GBW)

**Cohen, S. and Warren, R.D. (1990).** The intersection of disability and child abuse in England and the United States. *Child Welfare*, 69 (3), 253-262.

This article provides compelling support for improvements in current American systemic response to and public awareness of the abuse of developmentally disabled children. This article holds particular significance for abuse investigators and policy makers. (TFC)

**Milner, J.S. and Robertson, K.R. (1990).** Comparison of physical abusers, intra-familial sexual child abusers and child neglecters. *J. of Interpersonal Violence*, 5 (1), 37-48.

This article reports on a study of 150 subjects, including 30 physical abusers, 15 sexual abusers, 30 child neglecters and three matched non-abusing comparison groups for their levels of reported distress, unhappiness, loneliness, self-concept and family-related problems. While all the abuser groups reported higher levels of distress, loneliness and unhappiness, the sexual abusers reported positive views of their children and themselves, and fewer family problems. The use of these findings in the treatment of sexual abusers is discussed. (TFC)

**Milner, J.S., Robertson, K.R., and Rogers, D.L. (1990).** Childhood history of abuse and adult child abuse potential. *J. of Family Violence*, 5 (1), 15-34.

Utilizing the Childhood History Questionnaire (CHQ) and the Child Abuse Potential (CAP) Inventory, 375 adults were questioned in this study to measure adult physical child abuse potential. Consistent with other research on this question, findings revealed a very significant relationship between being abused as a child and perpetrating abuse as an adult. Of particular significance in this study was the finding of a strong and direct relationship between chronicity of abuse experienced in childhood and adult abuse potential. (TFC)

**Stevenson, R. and Alexander, R. (1990).** Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy presenting as a developmental disability. *Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics*, 11 (5), 262-264.

This brief report presents the case history of one 11-year child diagnosed with Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy (MSBP) who was portrayed by her mother as suffering multiple developmental disabilities. The complexity of the mother's psychopathology and the usefulness of multidisciplinary team evaluations in MSBP diagnoses are highlighted. (MC)

**Wolke, D., Skuse, D., and Mathisen, B. (1990).** Behavioral style in failure-to-thrive infants: A preliminary communication. *J. of Pediatric Psychology*, 15 (2), 237-254.

This article reports the findings of a pilot study involving nine infants with nonorganic failure to thrive and nine matched comparisons. Nonorganic failure to thrive infants were found to be more fussy, demanding, and unsociable as well as less task-oriented and persistent. They were also more likely to be developmentally delayed. The study's findings suggest that nonorganic failure to thrive infants' temperamental characteristics could be important contributions to poor infant-mother relationships. (SJK)

## SEXUAL ABUSE

**Berliner, L. and Conte, J. (1990).** The process of victimization: The victim's perspective. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 14 (1), 29-40. Twenty-three child victims of sexual abuse were interviewed about their victimization process, their perpetrators, and how their abuse might have been prevented. The results of this work indicated that the child sexual victimization process appears to include sexualization of the relationship, justification of the sexual contact, and maintenance of the child's continued cooperation. Sexual abuse investigators should find this article particularly useful. (TFC)

**Deblinger, E., McLeer, S., Henry, D. (1990).** Cognitive behavioral treatment for sexually abused children suffering Post-Traumatic Stress: Preliminary findings. *J. of the Am. Acad. of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 29 (5), 747-752.

The effectiveness of a cognitive-behavioral treatment program designed specifically for sexually abused children suffering from full diagnostic criteria of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) was examined in this study of 19 female victims. Using a combination of child and non-offending parent behavioral intervention strategies, this study compared pre- and post-assessment of PTSD symptoms in the child victims. While all PTSD symptoms were not eliminated, none of the children continued to meet full PTSD diagnostic criteria following treatment. (TFC)

**Everson, M. and Boat, B. (1990).** Sexualized doll play among young children: Implications for the use of anatomical dolls in sexual abuse evaluations. *J. of the Am. Acad. of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 29 (5), 736-743.

This study examined the incidence of sexual play with anatomical dolls in a sample of two to five year olds. Only six percent of the 209 non-abused children observed with anatomical dolls demonstrated behavior depicting sexual intercourse. The findings suggest that explicit sexual play with anatomical dolls is a very uncommon occurrence among non-abused children. (SJK)

**Hibbard, R. and Hartman, G. (1990).** Genitalia in human figure drawings: Childrearing practices and child sexual abuse. *J. of Pediatrics*, 116, 822-828.

This article describes a comparison study of 109 alleged child sexual abuse victims with a matched group of 109 non-abused children to examine the associations of drawing genitalia on a human figure, child rearing practices, and a history of sexual abuse. Study findings suggested that the presence of genitalia spontaneously drawn on a child's human figure drawing is positively associated with alleged sexual abuse, but not associated with child rearing practices (e.g., bathing, nudity, etc.) or a medical history (e.g., enuresis). (MC)

**Hunt, P. and Baird, M. (1990).** Children of sex rings. *Child Welfare*, 69 (3), 195 - 207.

This article presents some very important general information about child sex rings. Differences in the victimization process and coping behaviors observed in victims of single-offender abuse and sex rings are highlighted. Guides for therapeutic intervention with victims of sex rings are also discussed. (TFC)

**Jaudes, P.K., Morris, M. (1990).** Child sexual abuse: Who goes home? *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 14, 61 - 68.

Based on a study of medical records of 180 children hospitalized over a 7 year period (1979 - 1986) with a diagnosis of possible sexual abuse, the authors conclude that there is no clear systematic relationship between risk factors and court decisions to change a child's custody. (GBW)

**Kaplan, M.S., Becker, J.V. and Martinez, D.F. (1990).** A comparison of mothers of adolescent incest vs. non-incest perpetrators. *J. of Family Violence*, 5 (3), 209-214.

One hundred and thirty mothers of adolescent sexual perpetrators were interviewed in this study: 48 mothers of incest perpetrators and 82 mothers of non-incest perpetrators. Results indicated that significantly more mothers of incest perpetrators reported having been abused, having a sexual dysfunction, and having been in prior therapy. The mothers of the incest perpetrators also reported that they believed their son actually committed the charged offense, needed treatment, and had a history of being physically abused. (TFC)

**Ogata, S.N., Silk, K.R., Goodrich, S., Lohr, N.E., Westen, D. and Hill, E.M. (1990).** Childhood sexual and physical abuse in adult patients with borderline personality disorder. *Am. J. Psychiatry*, 147 (8), 1008-1013.

The child abuse and neglect experiences assessed in 24 adults diagnosed as having borderline personality disorder and in 18 depressed control subjects without borderline disorder are presented. Significantly more of the borderline patients reported childhood sexual abuse, abuse by more than one perpetrator and both sexual and physical abuse. An important contribution to the controversy surrounding the etiology of borderline personality disorder and its relationship to severe or traumatic childhood maltreatment. (TFC)

**Pellegrin, A., Wagner, W. (1990).** Child Sexual Abuse: Factors Affecting Victims' Removal from Home. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 14, 53 - 60.

The goal of this study was to identify factors associated with the removal of child sexual abuse victims from the home. An analysis of 43 substantiated cases of sexual abuse in which the child victims were removed from the home yielded 5 factors (mothers' compliance, mothers' belief, severity of abuse, mothers' employment status, frequency of abuse) which were found to be significantly related to the child protective service workers' decision to remove the child. (GBW)

**Rew, L. and Esparanza, D. (1990).** Barriers to disclosure among sexually abused male children. *J. of Child and Adol. Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing*, 3 (4), 120-127.

This article describes factors that may account for the reluctance of male victims to disclose sexual abuse. Implications for early identification and treatment of male victims and for further research are discussed. (SJK)

## CHILD ABUSE AND THE LEGAL SYSTEM

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**Clark, C.A. (1990).** Religious Accommodation and criminal liability. *Florida State University Law Review*, 17, 559-590.

This article examines the criminal liability under one state's religious accommodation statute for parents who rely on spiritual healing in lieu of medical treatment for their ill children. The various types of accommodation statutes, their application and recent Supreme Court decisions on this issue are discussed. While the author's conclusions may not be widely supported by child abuse professionals, her argument and reasoning deserve the attention of child abuse policy makers. (TFC)

**McEwan, J. (1990).** In the Box or on the Box? The Pigot Report and Child Witnesses. *Criminal Law Review*, June, 363-370.

This article summarizes the recommendations of a British Advisory Committee on Children's evidence, presenting a fascinating look at how another country treats some of the most pressing child witness testimony and evidence issues commonly encountered in abuse prosecutions. Several of the suggestions deserve serious consideration by American courts. (TFC)

**Mindlin, J.E. (1990).** Child sexual abuse and criminal statutes of limitations: A model for reform. *Washington Law Review*, 65, 189-207.

This Comment examines the increasingly pressing issue of child sexual abuse prosecutions that are blocked by state criminal statutes of limitations. Concluding that such statutes represent a formidable legal obstacle to the prosecution of many sex offenders, the author proposes several possible solutions, including a model legislative amendment. (TFC)