

The purpose of Journal Highlights is to inform readers of current literature on various aspects of child maltreatment. Selected articles from journals representing APSAC's multidisciplinary membership are presented in annotated bibliography form. APSAC members are invited to contribute to Journal Highlights by sending a copy of current articles, along with a two to three sentence review, to Thomas F. Curran, MSW, JD, Defenders Association of Philadelphia, Child Advocacy Unit, 121 N. Broad St. Philadelphia PA 19107

PHYSICAL ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Connelly, C.D. and Straus, M.A. (1992). Mother's age and risk for physical abuse. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 16 (5), 709-718.

This study investigated the relationship between the age of mothers and the physical abuse of their children from a nationally representative sample of 1,997 mothers. The results showed that the younger the mother, the greater the risk of physical abuse, provided mother's age is measured as age at time of birth of the abused child. A significant relationship was not found when mother's age was measured as age at time of abuse. Possible implications which these findings have for prevention and intervention policies are discussed. (TFC)

Sabotta, E.E. and Davis, R.L. (1992). Fatality after report to a child abuse registry in Washington state, 1973-1986. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 16 (5), 627-635.

This study analyzed the mortality rate for children reported to the Washington state child abuse registry between 1973 and 1986, compared to a cohort of children with no abuse reported. Children reported to the state registry had an almost threefold greater risk of death than children not reported as abused, and a report of physical abuse carried the greatest risk of subsequent death. (TFC)

SEXUAL ABUSE

Becker, J.V. and Hunter, J.A. (1992) Evaluation of treatment outcome for adult perpetrators of child sexual abuse. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 19 (1), 74-92.

Therapy outcome studies on adult sexual offenders of child victims are reviewed. Current theories of child sexual abuse are reviewed, along with various biological treatments for offenders and traditional therapies. Following a selected evaluation of treatment outcome studies, the authors conclude that sex offenders can be treated and effective programs are available with demonstrated low recidivism rates. The question requiring further empirical study is which therapeutic approach will be most effective given various client characteristics and conditions of treatment, not whether treatment for child molesters works. (TFC)

Hanson, R.F., Saunders, B.E., and Lipovsky, J.A. (1992). The relationship between self-reported levels of distress of parents and victims in incest families. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 1 (2), 49-60.

The purpose of this study of 32 incest families was to test empirical indicants that father perpetrators of incest and child victims are involved in close, enmeshed relationships, specifically concerning symptoms of emotional distress. The study failed to find evidence of a unique emotional enmeshment or special intimate relationship between the victim and perpetrator in incest families. Results did suggest, however, the existence of a familial, rather than dyadic, bond concerning symptoms of emotional distress, implying that overall family dysfunction may contribute significantly to levels of individual stress. Important research and clinical implications are discussed. (TFC)

Kendall-Tackett, K.A. (1992). Professionals' standards of "normal" behavior with anatomical dolls and factors that influence these standards. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 16 (5), 727-733.

In this study, a multidisciplinary sample of 201 professionals experienced in working with sexually abused children was asked to rate the normalcy of certain behaviors in non-abused children ages 2 to 5.9 years while using anatomical dolls. The majority of respondents agreed that engaging in highly sexualized behaviors with the dolls is abnormal for non-abused children, but could not agree about less-overtly sexual behaviors such as touching the dolls' breasts or genitals. The researchers examine how respondents' answers were influenced by their experience working with children, their profession, and their gender. (TFC)

McCormack, A., Rokous, F.E., Hazlewood, R.R., and Burgess, A.W., (1992). An exploration of incest in the childhood development of serial rapists. *Journal of Family Violence*, 7 (3), 219-228.

Sexual abuse in the childhood development of 41 incarcerated serial rapists is explored in this study to examine the early experiences of male incest victims. Just over half of the men who reported being sexually abused (N=31) recalled an incestuous experience as their first sexual experience. Among the several recommendations made is a call for renewed attention to the significance of childhood sibling incest, which, according to this study, should serve as a "red flag" that other incestuous activity has taken place. (TFC)

Watkins, W. and Bentovim, A. (1992). The sexual abuse of male children and adolescents: A review of current research. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry & Allied Disciplines*, 33 (1), 197-248.

This lengthy article reviews the current research on many aspects of the sexual abuse of males, with commentary on what is still not known about this victim population and suggestions for future research. The underreporting and underdetection of male victims is discussed in detail along with some initial and long-term effects which sexual abuse appears to have on male victims. (SF)

LEGAL ISSUES

Bulkley, J.A. (1992). The prosecution's use of social science expert testimony in child sexual abuse cases: national trends and recommendations. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 1 (2), 73-93.

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This thought-provoking article examines six categories of social science expert testimony presented by the prosecution regarding behaviors of child sexual abuse victims. The author argues that such testimony fails to meet basic evidence admissibility requirements of relevance and reliability and, except for rehabilitative testimony, should be excluded. Finally, the author recommends convening a multidisciplinary symposium of experts to address and debate the complex legal, psychological and ethical issues surrounding the admission of behavioral science expert testimony in child sexual abuse prosecutions. (TFC)

Bulkley, J.A. (1992). Recent Supreme Court decisions ease child abuse prosecutions: Use of closed-circuit television and children's statements of abuse under the confrontation clause. *Nova Law Review*, 16 (2), 687-709.

Recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions addressing the constitutionality of admitting children's hearsay statements of abuse and permitting closed-circuit television transmission of a child's testimony under the confrontation clause are discussed. Although attorneys will find it most useful, this article presents the very complex issues surrounding the testimony of child abuse victims and the confrontation clause in a manner which will also appeal to non-attorneys. (TFC)

OTHER ISSUES IN CHILD MALTREATMENT

Crouse, K.A. (1992). Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy: Recognizing the victim. *Pediatric Nursing*, 18 (3), 249-252.

Detection and management skills particularly important to nurses and other health care professionals are stressed in this article, which also provides an overview of Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy characteristics which will be helpful to all child maltreatment professionals. (TFC)

Daro, D. and Gelles, R.J. (1992). Public attitudes and behaviors with respect to child abuse prevention. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 7 (4), 517-531.

Utilizing data collected from a nationally representative sample of 1,250 respondents, this informative study examined public attitudes toward specific parental discipline practices, the incidence of specific practices, the public's support and involvement in child abuse prevention efforts, and the public's perception of the causes of child abuse. The results indicate a general public quite well educated about the nature and consequences of child abuse and willing to take personal action to prevent it. The discussion of whether public education and increased prevention efforts lead to changes in abusive parenting practices is enlightening. (TFC)

Gelles, R.J. (1992). Child protection needs to replace family reunification as the goal of child welfare agencies. *The Brown University Family Therapy Letter*, 4 (6), 1-2.

In a radical reversal of position, a nationally recognized authority on domestic violence outlines his reasons for abandoning his support of family reunification as a goal for child protective service agencies. Gelles argues that while family reunification policies help some children, social science and crime data clearly indicate that such policies place other children at unacceptable risk. According to Gelles, child protection and child advocacy should replace family reunification as the guiding policy of child welfare agencies. (TFC)

Harbeck, C., Peterson, L. and Starr, L. (1992). Previously abused child victims' response to a sexual abuse prevention program: A matter of measurers. *Behavior Therapy*, 23, 375-387.

The effects of the prevention program, "The Touch Continuum," with twenty children who all had histories of child sexual victimization were examined. Generally, children's demonstrated knowledge about sexual abuse prevention varied greatly, depending on the outcome measure utilized, with each measure tapping into a slightly different sexual abuse knowledge domain. Most significantly, children had difficulty recalling abuse prevention concepts when asked open-ended questions and in responding to role-play, where they could identify prevention information but had problems actually using that information. Methodological and ethical concerns important to abuse prevention research are discussed at length. (TFC)

Kalichman, S.C. (1992). Clinicians' attributions of responsibility for sexual and physical child abuse: An investigation of case-specific influences. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 1 (2), 33-47.

This study examined the influence of case-specific characteristics on patterns of child abuse responsibility attribution among a sample of 328 licensed psychologists from two states. Particularly significant among the findings was that fathers suspected of sexual abuse were held more responsible for their actions than those suspected of physical abuse. The results provide evidence that child sexual abuse allegations may be viewed and responded to by clinicians more seriously than physical abuse cases. Considering these results, it appears that professional expectations and actions may vary for fathers and mothers in abusive families depending on the type of child abuse perpetrated. (TFC)

Weissman Wind, T. and Silvern, L. (1992). Type and extent of child abuse as predictors of adult functioning. *Journal of Family Violence*, 7 (4), 261-281.

Information regarding child abuse histories as well as current functioning was gathered from a community sample of 259 working women. Contrary to speculation that types of child abuse have unique consequences, the results of this study indicate that physical and sexual abuse have common long-term correlates in terms of internalizing symptoms. Incest and severe physical abuse were each associated with similar symptoms, with women who were more severely abused showing worse outcomes. (TFC)

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