

The purpose of Journal Highlights is to inform readers of current research on various aspects of child maltreatment. Selected articles from journals representing APSAC's multidisciplinary membership are represented in an annotated bibliography format. APSAC members are invited to contribute to Journal Highlights by sending a copy of current articles (preferably published within the past six months), along with a two or three sentence review, to Thomas F. Curran, MSW, JD, Child Advocacy Unit, Defender Association of Philadelphia, 121 N. Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107-1913

## PHYSICAL ABUSE AND NEGLECT

**Hegar, R.L., Zuravin, S.J., and Orme, J.G.** (1994). Factors predicting severity of physical child abuse injury: A review of the literature. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 9(2), 170-183.

This article reviews the research literature on predictors of severe and fatal physical abuse. Of the various factors relating to the victim, the perpetrator, and abuse reports, the only one found in this literature review to relate consistently to the severity of injury is the age of the child.

## SEXUAL ABUSE

**Abel, G. Lawry, S., Karlstrom, E., Osborn, C., and Gillespie, C.** (1994). Screening tests for pedophilia. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 21(1), 115-131.

As one article in a special issue of *Criminal Justice and Behavior* edited by Robert A. Prentky on the assessment and treatment of sex offenders, this article reviews several clinical cases demonstrating typical patterns of how pedophiles victimize children within their places of employment, describes some of the screening symptoms currently in use by child-serving organizations, and discusses their limitations. The efficiency of a relatively new and less intrusive screening test for pedophilia, the Abel Screen, is reviewed, and compares favorably with phallometry in identifying those inclined toward sexual involvement with boys.

**Cross, T., DeVos, E., and Whitcomb, D.** (1994). Prosecution of child sexual abuse: Which cases are accepted? *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 18(8), 663-677.

This detailed study examines the relationships of case characteristics, maternal support, and child psychopathology to the acceptance of child sexual abuse cases for prosecution, and raises many questions for future research. In the single predictor analyses, acceptance for prosecution was significantly related to the child's age, the relationship between alleged perpetrator and child, severity of the allegation, availability of different forms of evidence, and how the case was disclosed and investigated. Penetration did not significantly increase the likelihood of acceptance for prosecution. The need to strengthen children's ability to testify and improve investigation practices is discussed.

**Deblinger, E., Lippman, J., Stauffer, L. and Finkel, M.** (1994). Personal versus professional response to child sexual abuse allegations. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 18(8), 679-682.

This preliminary investigation compares professional expectations of non-offending parents' responses during sexual abuse investigations with the professionals' personal responses to a hypothetical discovery that their own child had been sexually abused by a spouse or lover. The results find a discrepancy between the personal responses and professional expectations expressed by female professionals. No such divergence is indicated by the male respondents. An interesting discussion of professional role socialization and training is presented.

**Elliott, D.M. and Smiljanich, K.** (1994). Sex offending among juveniles: Development and response. *Journal of Pediatric Health Care*, 8(3), 101-105.

Directed primarily at health care providers, this article supplies basic information on normal and aberrant sexual activity in children. Various characteristics and risk factors associated with juvenile sex offenders are examined, along with some treatment approaches.

**Haywood, T.W. and Grossman, I.S.** (1994). Denial of deviant sexual arousal and psychopathology in child molesters. *Behavior Therapy*, 25, 327-340.

Based on a sample of 116 men, 75 of whom were accused of molesting children, this study uses a subjective index of self-reported sexual interest known as the Pictorial Sexual Interest Card Sort (PSICS) and the MMPI to determine whether alleged offenders honestly report their sexual interests and whether this varies with self-reported symptoms of psychopathology. Results suggest caution in interpreting subjective self-reports of sexual interests by alleged child molesters who deny engaging in deviant behaviors. In addition, lower self-reports of deviant sexual arousal was significantly associated with minimization of psychopathology on the MMPI.

**Herman-Giddens, M.E.** (1994). Vaginal foreign bodies and child sexual abuse. *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*, 148, 195-200.

A sample of twelve girls, ages ten and under, was examined to determine whether vaginal foreign bodies (VFBs) in prepubertal girls was associated with child sexual abuse. On examination, all the girls presented in the general pediatric clinic with vaginal discharges, and a total of 28 foreign bodies were removed from the total sample of twelve. Eleven of the girls were either suspected or confirmed victims of sexual abuse.

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**Hartman, G., Karlson, H., and Hibbard, R.** (1994). Attorney attitudes regarding behaviors associated with child sexual abuse. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 18(8), 657-662

Two prosecutors and two defense attorneys from each county in Indiana were asked to complete a questionnaire indicating if they believed certain behaviors were acceptable, inappropriate, or sexual abuse if they occurred on one or on multiple occasions. Behaviors that weren't "obviously sexual" in nature weren't considered abusive by a majority of both groups, even if the behavior occurred on several occasions. Not surprisingly, defense attorneys were more likely to indicate behaviors as acceptable, regardless of their frequency. Prosecutors, on the other hand, were more likely to regard the behaviors in question as abusive or at least inappropriate. Cognitive dissonance theory is offered as one explanation for the groups' differences.

**Hunter, J.A., and Becker J.V.** (1994). The role of deviant sexual arousal in juvenile sexual offending: Etiology, evaluation, and treatment. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 21(1), 132-149.

This article reviews the construct of deviant sexual arousal and its application to understanding juvenile sexual offending. Studies relevant to the etiology of deviant juvenile sexual arousal are reviewed, along with efforts to alter such arousal patterns through cognitive-behavioral therapies. Noting that juvenile sex offenders are a heterogeneous group with diverse evaluation and treatment needs, the authors conclude that research to date suggests that deviant sexual arousal in juveniles can be changed and the risk of recidivism diminished.

**Jenny, C., Roesler T., and Poyer, K.** (1994). Are children at risk for sexual abuse by homosexuals? *Pediatrics*, 94(1), 41-44.

The hospital charts of 352 children referred for suspected child sexual abuse were reviewed to determine what percentage, if any, had been molested by someone who might have an identifiable homosexual orientation. In the 269 cases where sexual abuse was suspected, only two children (0.7%) were molested by someone identified as potentially homosexual or lesbian. Problems generated by efforts to establish an alleged offender's sexual orientation and the retrospective nature of this study are discussed. No evidence was produced from this study that children are at greater risk of sexual assault by identified homosexuals than by other adults.

**Lodico, M.A. and DiClemente, R.J.** (1994). The association between childhood sexual abuse and prevalence of HIV-Related risk behaviors. *Clinical Pediatrics*, 33(8) 498-502.

This study, with a sample of over 5,000 high school students from one state, examines the links between childhood sexual abuse and a wide range of HIV-related risk behaviors. Sexually abused adolescents were much more likely than their non-abused peers to report being sexually active. Neither sexually abused males nor females, however, were likely to change their sexual behaviors because of the risk of HIV or AIDS.

**Mennen, F.E. and Meadow, D.** (1994). A preliminary study of the factors related to trauma in childhood sexual abuse. *Journal of Family Violence*, 9(2), 125-142.

With a sample of 75 sexually abused girls, this study examines levels of depression, anxiety, and self-worth. Examination of certain abuse-specific variables produces some interesting and significant interactions. The abused girls' scores were much different from standardization samples, and none of the abuse predictor variables alone significantly affected outcome. For example, this study supported previous studies finding that neither duration of abuse nor age of the child when abuse began are, taken alone, significantly related to outcome.

## OTHER ISSUES IN CHILD MALTREATMENT

**DePanfilis, D. and Scannapieco, M.** (1994). Assessing the safety of children at risk of maltreatment: Decision-making models. *Child Welfare*, 73(3), 229-245.

Ten child protective decision-making models are reviewed in this informative article. Results indicate that although some criteria overlap in these models, there are also very wide differences in definitions, purposes, and level of research support for the decision-making criteria being used.

**Myers, J.E.B.** (1993). Investigative interviews of children: Should they be videotaped? *Notre Dame Journal of Law, Ethics and Public Policy*, 7(2), 371-386.

This article presents some of the more popular arguments for and against videotaping investigative interviews of abused children. Arguments on both sides of this heated issue are discussed in an unbiased and clear manner.

**Rorty, M., Yager, J. and Rossotto, E.** (1994). Childhood sexual, physical and psychological abuse in bulimia nervosa. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 151(8), 1122-1126.

This study sought to determine if rates of childhood sexual, physical, and psychological abuse differed between women with lifetime histories of bulimia and women with no history of eating disorders. As hypothesized, women with a lifetime history of bulimia reported higher rates of childhood abuse, especially physical and psychological abuse. Overall, the bulimic women were found to have experienced higher level of childhood trauma.

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