

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

Berliner, L. (1994) The problem with neglect; and **Dubowitz, H.** (1994). Neglecting the neglect of neglect. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 9(4), 556-560.

In this brief "Commentary," the neglect of child neglect by child maltreatment literature, research funding sources, and professionals who routinely work with maltreated children is examined. Dubowitz offers some possible explanations for this omission of what is the cause of nearly half of all child maltreatment-related fatalities each year. From his observation that "the term 'abuse' connotes a ring of urgency in a way 'neglect' does not," to the difficulty in defining child neglect, this short piece offers a great deal for practitioners and policy makers to consider regarding the most commonly reported type of child maltreatment

Buntain-Ricklefs, J., Kemper, K., Bell, M., and Babonis, T. (1994). Punishments: What predicts adult approval. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 18(11), 945-955.

A total of 527 parents completed the Parent Discipline Attitudes Survey, which was derived from the Emotional and Physical Abuse Questionnaire (EPAB) to assess: a) the prevalence of various types of physical and emotional punishment received during their childhoods; b) the prevalence of current parental approval of these types of punishments; and c) risk factors associated with current approval of physical and emotional abuse. While few parents approved of most types of physical and emotional punishment, 19% approved of hitting children with objects; 25% approved of hitting with a belt; and 88% approved of spanking. In addition, receiving more punishment as a child was strongly associated with current acceptance of physical and emotional forms of punishment, lending support to the theory that physical punishment of children serves to legitimize the later use of violence

Carey, T.A. (1994). Spare the rod and spoil the child. Is this a sensible justification for the use of punishment in child rearing? *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 18(12), 1005-1010.

This brief article examines the proverb, "Spare the rod and spoil the child," in both its modern and commonly misquoted Biblical forms, as well as concepts and theoretical support for punishment and corporal punishment. A behaviorist perspective suggests that corporal punishment does not result in a prolonged reduction in targeted behaviors and, therefore, cannot be considered punishment. Instead, the author argues that corporal punishment is unnecessary and inherently abusive.

Hemenway, D., Solnick, S., and Carter, J. (1994) Child-rearing violence. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 18(12), 1011-1020

A national random sample of 801 adults was questioned about the punishment they received as children and the way they (now) discipline their children. Data analysis from this study revealed that verbal and physical discipline co-occur: parents who yell frequently are also more likely to hit frequently, and parents who rarely yell, rarely hit. In addition, both physical and verbal violence appear to be transgenerational.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Deblinger, E., Stauffer, L., and Landsberg, C. (1994). The impact of a history of child sexual abuse on maternal response to allegations of sexual abuse concerning her child. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 3(3), 67-75.

With a total sample of 183 nonoffending mothers of suspected victims of child sexual abuse (CSA), this study compared mothers with (n=83) and without (n=100) a history of CSA with respect to demographic variables, psychosocial functioning, and personal responses to abuse allegations concerning their children. Results indicated only two significant differences in psychosocial adjustment as a function of maternal history of CSA: mothers with a history of abuse exhibited significantly higher levels of general symptom distress, and felt more alone in facing their child's abuse

Gilbert-Evans, C.M., and Redditt, C.A. (1994). Adolescent sexual offenders: Potential for a healthier lifestyle. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, 15(5), 505-518.

A general overview of research on adolescent sex offenders is provided, along with some of the assessment and treatment roles and responsibilities which are unique to psychiatric/mental health nurses. The authors argue in favor of family system-based intervention which focuses on individual variables that contribute to the sexual offense, understanding victim impact, and resolution of family-related factors that precipitated and maintained the offending behavior. The authors call for violence-related content as a mandatory part of all nursing education, and for psychiatric/mental health nurses to provide holistic assessment and treatment that includes attention to physical health-related issues.

Levesque, R.J.R. (1994). Sex differences in the experience of child sexual victimization. *Journal of Family Violence*, 9(4), 357-369.

This study analyzed 390 cases of child sexual abuse (303 girls; 87 boys) to expand on existing research on gender differences in child sexual victimization. Three areas which have received consider-

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able empirical attention were focused upon: victims' relationship with the offender, type and extent of abuse, and disclosure. Findings largely replicated previous studies regarding sex differences in victims' relationships with offenders, and for differences in disclosure patterns. Contrary to previous findings regarding the type and extent of abuse, this study found significant gender differences, including that girls were more likely to report directly to police, while boys were more likely to be identified as suspected victims by anonymous reports. In addition, girls were found to be victims of more physical injury, violent threats, and use of force. These results also contradict the popular belief that children do not self-initiate disclosures of sexual abuse.

Lisak, D. (1994) The psychological impact of sexual abuse: Content analysis of interviews with male survivors. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 7*(4), 525-548.

Autobiographical interviews with 26 adult male survivors of childhood sexual abuse were audiotaped, transcribed verbatim, and content analyzed to identify common psychological themes. Interestingly, a near equal number of the men were abused by male and female perpetrators. Clinical observations of previous studies of adult male survivors were validated. Fifteen psychological themes/states were identified and discussed in detail. One of the most salient aspects of this analysis was the impact of childhood sexual abuse on the victims' current perception of their gender and sexual identities.

Pescosolido, F.J. (1993) Clinical considerations related to victimization dynamics and post-traumatic stress in the group treatment of sexually abused boys. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Group Therapy, 3*(1), 49-73.

Clinical considerations inherent in the development of a boy's time-limited psycho-educational sexual abuse group are described. The boy's presenting problems are divided into two categories: victimization dynamics and post-traumatic stress. Five impact-specific dynamics are discussed, including victim-victimizer identity struggle, abandonment fear, accelerated sexual arousal, body conflict, and shame. Post-traumatic stress dynamics are psychophysiological dysregulation, post-abuse reenactment potential, post-abuse triggers, intrusion, and numbing.

Zlotnick, C., Begin, A., Shea, M.T., Pearlstein, T., Simpson, E. and Costello, E. (1994). The relationship between characteristics of sexual abuse and dissociative experiences. *Comprehensive Psychiatry, 35*(6), 465-470.

This study of 56 severely traumatized female psychiatric inpatients found that a reported history of sexual revictimization by a greater number of offenders (four or more) was significantly related to a higher level of adult dissociative experiences. In addition, the women in this study reported histories of both sexual and physical abuse, and on average, high scores on the Dissociative Experience Scale (DES). Two plausible explanations are offered for the relationship between high dissociators and being abused by several offenders: first, that initially dissociation is used successfully as an escape mechanism against trauma; and second, that individuals who suffer from dissociative pathology are more vulnerable to revictimization.

OTHER ISSUES IN CHILD MALTREATMENT

Brody, A.L. and Green, R. (1994). Washington State's unscientific approach to the problem of repeat sex offenders. *Bulletin of the American Academy of Psychiatry and Law, 22*(3), 343-356.

Policy makers, attorneys, and clinicians who treat sex offenders will find this examination of Washington's 1990 Sexual Predator Act interesting. Despite the authors' clear bias, they raise important legal and ethical issues surrounding this Act.

Myers, J.E.B. (1994). Taint hearings for child witnesses? A step in the wrong direction. *Baylor Law Review, 46*, 873-945.

A thorough analysis of the New Jersey Supreme Court's June 1994 decision in *State v. Margaret Kelly Michaels* (136 N.J. 299, 642 A.2d 1372, 1994) is presented. The Court ventured into previously uncharted waters by ruling that where a substantial likelihood exists that interviews of child sexual abuse victims were improperly conducted, a pretrial "taint" hearing is required, and that the State must show by clear and convincing evidence that statements contained a sufficient degree of reliability to warrant admission at trial. This article argues, quite convincingly, that Michaels was wrongfully decided. However, given the Court's decision, a framework for conducting "taint" hearings is presented.

Toubia, N. (1994). Female circumcision as a public health issue. *The New England Journal of Medicine, 331*(11), 712-716.

This article reviews the most common types of female circumcisions, or as the author describes the practices, female genital mutilation; their complications; problems in caring for circumcised women; and a brief review of legal and ethical issues associated with this practice. Noting that the mildest form of female circumcision, clitoridectomy, is anatomically equivalent to amputation of the penis, the author argues that any form of female circumcision will result in damage to the clitoris. Physical complications, along with psychological and sexual side effects of female circumcision, are discussed in detail, along with an examination of its cultural meanings. Citing four through ten as the ages at which girls are most commonly circumcised, this article invites important discussion of how a culturally accepted practice can still be abusive to a child.

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