

The purpose of Journal Highlights is to inform readers of current research on various aspects of child maltreatment. 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 (FAX 215 557-4910)

PHYSICAL ABUSE AND NEGLECT

French, G. and Johnson, C. (1994). Bites in the night: Determining the etiology of bite marks on an infant. *Pediatric Emergency Care*, 10(2), 281-283.

This short article describes apparent bite marks found on a 19-day-old infant admitted to a hospital, and how they were finally diagnosed as human bites. A useful procedure for assessing and diagnosing bite marks in young children is outlined.

Starling, F., Holden, J.R. and Jenny, C. (1995). Abusive head trauma: The relationship of perpetrators to their victims. *Pediatrics*, 95(2), 259-262.

The perpetrators of abusive head trauma and their relationship to 151 child victims was examined. Results indicated that male children were more likely to be victims of such abuse, with biological fathers being the most common perpetrators. It is suggested that female baby-sitters as a possible risk group of perpetrators should receive more attention.

Milner, J.S. (1994). Assessing physical child abuse risk: The Child Abuse Potential Inventory. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 14(6), 547-583.

A detailed critical review of studies reporting on the reliability, construct validity, and predictive validity of the Child Abuse Potential Inventory (CAP) physical abuse scale is provided. The physical abuse risk factors outlined in the family violence literature are summarized, along with an examination of the relationship between each of those risk factors and CAP scores. Validity estimates from predictable validity studies are reported, along with the utility of using the CAP abuse scale in treatment evaluations.

Trocme, N., McPhee, D. and Tam, K.K. (1995) Child abuse and neglect in Ontario: Incidence and characteristics. *Child Welfare*, 74(3), 563-586.

Based on a representative sample of 2,447 children, this article presents descriptive findings from the Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (OIS), the first Canadian study to examine the incidence and characteristics of reported child maltreatment. OIS found an incidence rate of reported maltreatment of 21 per 1,000 children, and a 27% substantiation rate. By comparison, the U.S. incidence rate (45 per 1,000) is more than double that of Ontario. Some interesting possible reasons for this difference, are presented.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Williams, L. and Finkelhor, D. (1995). Paternal care giving and incest: Test of a biosocial model. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 65(1), 101-113.

This study examines the biosocial thesis as a mechanism for inhibiting father-daughter incest. Applying a biosocial model to incest, it was hypothesized that close personal involvement by fathers in the early care of their daughters would decrease or inhibit the likelihood of any later sexual interest. The paternal involvement of two groups of incestuous fathers was compared with a closely matched control group. Detailed findings are presented. Consistent with the biosocial thesis, this study confirmed that, generally, fathers who were actively involved with the early care of their daughters presented lower risk for incest, although the caregiving behaviors did not seem to inhibit sexual arousal as proposed. Caregiving was not proven to be a fail-safe protection or inhibitor, as one-fifth of the very highest caregiving fathers still committed incest in later years.

Berliner, I. and Conte, J. (1995) The effects of disclosure and intervention on sexually abused children. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 19(3), 371-384.

In this retrospective study, 82 children (all at least eight years old at the time of the study) and their families were interviewed about their experiences surrounding their respective abuse experiences, disclosures and subsequent intervention. Although study results indicated that children's reactions to disclosure and intervention varied considerably, all but one child felt in retrospect that disclosing their victimization was a good thing, and all the children recommended that other children disclose abuse. Based on the children's responses, some important recommendations are made for improving intervention by all professionals who work with sexually abused children.

Lamb, M.E. (1994) The investigation of child sexual abuse: An Interdisciplinary Consensus Statement. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 3(4), 93-106.

A Consensus Statement on the investigation of child sexual abuse, which represents the agreement of twenty professionals from five countries, is presented. This thoughtful document addresses many different practices and issues involved in the investigation of child sexual abuse. Clearly, not all readers will agree with every part of the Statement. The six short commentaries which follow the Consensus Statement provide a useful examination of its strengths and weaknesses.

OTHER ISSUES IN CHILD MALTREATMENT

Socolar, R.S. and Stein, R.K. (1995) Spanking infants and toddlers: Maternal belief and practice. *Pediatrics*, 95(1), 105-111.

Mothers of infants and toddlers (all under four years old) from two different locations were interviewed about

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their beliefs and practices regarding spanking. A belief in spanking was found to correlate very significantly with negative parenting and the practice and severity of spanking. Female children were spanked more than males, and mothers who were spanked were most likely to spank their children.

Massat, C.R. (1995). Is older better? Adolescent parenthood and maltreatment. *Child Welfare*, 74(2), 325-336

To test the hypothesis that adolescent parents are not overrepresented in the population of indicated maltreating parents or the population of parents of children placed in foster care, this study analyzed demographic data on all parents who were subjects of indicated abuse reports in Illinois in 1988 (N = 23,764) and all Illinois parents with children in foster care on one day in 1990 (N = 8,535). The results supported the relatively rare inclusion of adolescent parents in both groups. An excellent literature review on adolescent parenthood and child abuse is provided, along with an examination of social rather than biological factors which produce negative effects on the children of adolescents.

Williams, L.M. (1994). Recall of childhood trauma: A prospective study of women's memories of child sexual abuse. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 62(6), 1167-1176

This is a prospective study of a community sample of 129 women with well-documented histories of childhood sexual abuse. The study asks the following questions: how common is forgetting childhood sexual abuse; and, is forgetting associated only with young age at the time of abuse and suggestive of infantile amnesia, or are other factors, independent of age, associated with forgetting? A balanced review of the literature on adult memories of childhood sexual abuse is presented. Over one-third of this study's subjects (38%) did not report the sexual abuse they experienced in childhood. The study provides strong evidence that forgetting is associated not only with age, but with relationship to the perpetrator, and that having no recall of childhood sexual abuse is a common occurrence for adult women who have actually been victimized in childhood.

Maluccio, A., Pine, B. and Warsh, R. (1994). Protecting children by preserving their families. *Child and Youth Services Review*, 16(5/6), 295-307

This essay argues that, at the philosophical and policy levels, family preservation and child protection are complementary rather than competing values. Ideas for the continued important discussion of child protection versus family preservation are presented.

Finkelhor, D. and Dziuba-Leatherman, J. (1995). Victimization prevention programs: A national survey of children's exposure and reactions. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 19(2), 129-139

This article describes the National Youth Victimization Prevention Study, which interviewed by telephone a representative sample of 2,000 U.S. children and their care takers about the children's experiences with abuse and victimization prevention programs. Two-thirds of the children (all between ages ten and sixteen) reported participation in at least one prevention program at some time. Overall, the responses of children and their parents to these programs was quite positive. As a result of the programs, 92% of the children reported being more aware of victimization, and 94% reported that they were better prepared to avoid potential danger. Policy recommendations are presented.

Finkelhor, D., Asdigian, N. and Dziuba-Leatherman, J. (1995). The effectiveness of victimization prevention instruction: An evaluation of children's responses to actual threats and assaults. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 19(2) 141-153.

Using data gathered from the National Youth Victimization Prevention Study, this study examines whether prevention instruction in school and at home had any impact on the children's behavior in situations of real encounters with attempted victimization. Study findings support the hypothesis that prevention education can help improve children's responses to victimization, and that school-based programs help increase knowledge, inspire a sense of efficacy, and promote abuse disclosures. Even more significant, parental instruction was found to be most helpful in actually thwarting victimization attempts. One disturbing finding was that children with more comprehensive school programs also experienced more injury in coping with sexual assault, possibly due to their more aggressive resistance.

Kinard, E.M. (1995). Perceived social support and competence in abused children: A longitudinal perspective. *Journal of Family Violence*, 10(1), 73-98.

Applying the stress/social support/psychological well-being model and the social network theory as the framework for analysis, this very interesting study examines the impact of child abuse on children's self-perceptions of social support and competence. It also examines the influence of maternal social support and competence on child self-perceptions at two points in time. The sample consisted of 165 abused children and their mothers, and a very closely matched comparison group of 169 non-abused children and their mothers. Interestingly, study findings do not support the conclusion that maltreatment constitutes a significant source of stress for children, at least based upon their self-evaluations of social support and competence. Perceived support from mothers and peers, however, was found to significantly affect children's global sense of self-worth, as well as depression.

Hewitt, S.K. and Arrowood, A.A. (1994). Systematic touch exploration as a screening procedure for child abuse: A pilot study. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 3(2), 31-43.

This article describes a pilot study of a Systematic Touch exploration format, involving simple drawings with child participation, for screening child abuse. Although the Touch Continuum is presented only as a tool with potential usefulness for a variety of professionals screening for child sexual abuse, and is not a psychometrically-based test, it nonetheless clearly warrants additional examination. In this study, no false positives were found, and the results were consistent with previous research indicating that children often underreport sexual abuse and that initial investigative screening provides only partial disclosure.

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