

JOURNAL HIGHLIGHTS

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 Rochelle F. Hanson, Ph.D., National Crime Victims Research & Treatment Center, Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston, SC 29425 (FAX 843 792-2945) e-mail: hansonrf@musc.edu.

Sexual and/or Physical Abuse

Medical Examinations of Sexually Abused Children: Legal Implications

This article discusses the socio-legal implications of medical examinations of sexually abused children and adolescents. The effect of these examinations on criminal vs civil court cases is discussed, and recommended research directions and barriers to be overcome are addressed.

De Jong, A.R. (1998). Impact of child sexual abuse medical examinations on the dependency and criminal systems. *Child Abuse & Neglect*. Vol 22(6), 645-652.

The Link Between Childhood Sexual Abuse and Adult Alcohol Abuse in Women

Though a relationship between childhood sexual abuse and later alcohol use among women has been documented, little is known about the pathways that link these 2 variables. A tension reduction hypothesis posits that emotional distress precedes substance usage. The posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptomatology resulting from childhood sexual abuse is examined as a possible source of emotional distress that may cause subsequent alcohol use. A sample of 2,994 adult women was selected and interviewed on 2 occasions 1 year apart and childhood rape history, lifetime PTSD symptoms, and lifetime alcohol use were assessed. Path analytic techniques were used to evaluate the mediating role of PTSD symptoms on the relationship between childhood rape and subsequent alcohol use. A history of childhood rape doubled the number of alcohol abuse symptoms that women experienced in adulthood. Path analysis and cross-validation results demonstrated significant pathways connecting childhood rape to PTSD symptoms and PTSD symptoms to alcohol use. Results suggest that PTSD symptomatology that develops after childhood rape may be one of many variables that affect alcohol abuse patterns in women who were victims of childhood sexual abuse.

Epstein, J.N., Saunders, B.E., Kilpatrick, D.G., & Resnick, H.S. (1998). PTSD as a mediator between childhood rape and alcohol use in adult women. *Child Abuse & Neglect*. Vol 22(3), 223-234.

The Behavioral Manifestations of Child Sexual Abuse

This paper is organized into several broad areas, including an update on research assessing the behavioral manifestations resulting from sexual abuse, the explication of a model that can be useful to guide future research and an examination of research that is needed to help us further understand abuse impact. Contexts examined are familial as well as reflective of an individual child or adolescent's processing of the abuse experience.

Friedrich, W.N. (1998). Behavioral manifestations of child sexual abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect*. Vol 22(6), 523-531.

Improving Quality and Quantity of Information Obtained from Victims of Child Sexual Abuse

This article reviews the literature on factors that influence children's competence, and discusses ways in which investigative interviewers can maximize the quality and quantity of information they obtain from alleged witnesses and victims. The authors found that children are often the only available sources of information about possible abusive experiences. Research has shown that children can, in fact, be remarkably competent informants, although the quality and quantity of the information they provide is greatly influenced by the ways in which they are interviewed. Methods by which investigative interviewers can maximize the amount and quality of information they elicit from alleged victims are described.

Lamb, M.E., Sternberg, K.J., & Esplin, P.W. (1998). Conducting investigative interviews of alleged sexual abuse victims. *Child Abuse & Neglect*. Vol 22(8), 813-823.

Review of Literature and Current Controversies on Memories of Childhood Sexual Abuse

This article was developed by the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies to inform professionals and the public about the complex and important issues that are involved in the current controversy about memories of childhood sexual abuse. It addresses the questions of childhood trauma, traumatic memory, the memory process, clinical issues and forensic implications pertaining to this controversy. The authors have tried to present a balanced review of these issues. As an international organization dedicated to promoting the best research and education in this field, they believe it essential that people who grapple with this controversial topic be equipped with the most accurate and comprehensive information possible.

Roth, S & Friedman, M.J. (1998). Childhood trauma remembered: A report on the current scientific knowledge base and its applications. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*. Vol 7(1), 83-109.

Other Issues In Child Maltreatment

Treating Intrafamily Abuse: The Abuse Clarification Process

One aspect of treatment for child abuse and neglect addresses the attributions that the child victim, offender, nonoffending parents, and other family members have about the occurrence of the maltreatment. This paper describes a formal approach for abuse clarification to be used with families in which maltreatment has occurred. The 4 primary components of the abuse clarification process are: (1) clarification of the abusive behaviors; (2) offender assumption of responsibility for the abuse; (3) offender expression of awareness of the impact of the abuse on the child victim and family; and, (4) initiation of a plan to ensure future safety. The process of abuse clarification is described and suggestions made for appropriate use of the procedure. Five case examples are presented as illustrations of the process.

Lipovsky, J.A., Swenson, C.C., Ralston, M. E. Saunders, B.E. (1998). The abuse clarification process in the treatment of intrafamilial child abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect*. Vol 22(7), 729-741.

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The Effects of Abuse and Community Violence on Children's Symptomatology

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With a sample of 188 maltreated and 134 nonmaltreated children between the ages of 7-12 years, this investigation employed a 1-year longitudinal design to conduct an ecological-transactional analysis of the mutual relationships among community violence, child maltreatment, and children's functioning over time. Indicators of children's functioning were externalizing and internalizing behavior problems and self-rated traumatic stress reactions, depressive symptomatology, and self-esteem. Rates of maltreatment, particularly physical abuse, were related to levels of child-reported violence in the community. In addition, child maltreatment and exposure to community violence were related to different aspects of children's functioning. Specific effects were observed for neglect and sexual abuse and for witnessing and being victimized by violence in the community. Finally, there was evidence that children and their contexts mutually influence each other over time. Results were discussed within the framework of an ecological-transactional model of development.

Lynch, M., & Cicchetti, D. (1998). An ecological-transactional analysis of children and contexts: The longitudinal interplay among child maltreatment, community violence, and children's symptomatology. *Development & Psychopathology*, Vol 10(2), 235-257.

Evaluation and Review of Project SafeCare

Describes Project SafeCare, an ecobehavioral research and treatment project conducted with 116 families either reported or at risk for child abuse or neglect. Project SafeCare focuses on 3 areas of intervention: (1) home safety, (2) infant and child health care, and (3) bonding and stimulation (parent-child training). Each service component is conducted over 5 weeks. Two groups of families are served: a nonabuse, at-risk group is referred from a local hospital maternity center, and an abuse/neglect group is referred from the Department of Children and Family Services. Preliminary demographic data are reviewed along with indirect assessment data and measures including the Child Abuse Potential Inventory, the Parenting Stress Index, and the Eyberg Child Behavior Inventory. Four case studies are described to exemplify the effects of training provided to families. The implications for the current assessment data, treatment and outcome are also discussed.

Lutzker, J.R., Bigelow, K.M., Doctor, R.M., & Kessler, M.L. (1998). Safety, health care, and bonding within an ecobehavioral approach to treating and preventing child abuse and neglect. *Journal of Family Violence*, Vol 13(2), 163-185.

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