Child Abuse

Contributing Factors and Mental Health Outcomes of First Suicide Attempt During Childhood and Adolescence: Results From a Nationally Representative Study.
From a large national database, attempted suicide in children less than 13 years of age was more associated with childhood abuse, vs. adolescent suicide attempts more associated with depression. Children who attempted suicide were more likely than adolescents to try again (61.3% vs. 32.6%).

Pérez-González A, Pereda N.
Systematic review of the prevalence of suicidal ideation and behavior in minors who have been sexually abused.
In a review of European Union research studies on this topic, child/adolescent “victims of childhood sexual abuse have a 2- to 3-fold higher risk of suicidal ideation and 3- to 4-fold higher risk of attempted suicide than nonvictims.”

Should Children with Suspected Nonaccidental Injury Be Admitted to a Surgical Service?
Of 671 children with a final diagnosis of non-accidental trauma admitted to a level I pediatric trauma center, approximately one half were admitted to a non-surgical service (NSS) and one half to a surgical service (SS). However, the rate of care-related indicators (delay in diagnosis, missed injury, lack of consult, lack of follow-up, readmission, etc.) per 100 patients was 33 for NSS compared with 12 for SS. Authors support American College of Surgeons requirement of admission of suspected abused children to a surgical service.

Lee JK, Brady KM, Deutsch N.
The Anesthesiologist’s Role in Treating Abusive Head Trauma.
Review for anesthesiologists of complex injury mechanisms inherent to abusive head trauma in children, treatment guidelines, and anesthetic considerations.

Cicchetti D, Hetzel S, Rogosch FA, Handley ED, Toth SL.
An investigation of child maltreatment and epigenetic mechanisms of mental and physical health risk.
Entire DNA profiles were assessed for 548 school-aged low-income children with median age of 9.4 years, 54.4% of whom had a history of child maltreatment. Higher levels of epigenetic methylation (DNA changes) were found in the maltreated children in sites associated with mental health, cancer, cardiovascular systems and immune functioning than in the non-maltreated children. In addition, differences were found for gender and timing of abuse.

Hecker T, Radtke KM, et al.
Authors found particular DNA changes in blood and saliva in 35 Tanzanian children with high exposure to abuse compared to a low exposure group, which correlated with children’s self-reported abuse. “On a molecular level, our findings strengthen the credibility of children’s self-reports.”

Noll JG, Trickett PK, Long JD, et al.
Childhood Sexual Abuse and Early Timing of Puberty.
In this small study of 84 sexually abused girls and matched controls, and controlling for other factors, a history of sexual abuse was associated with an 8-12 month earlier onset of puberty. This may increase risk for psychosocial difficulties, menstrual problems, and reproductive cancers.
Clément MÉ, Bérubé A, Chamberland C. 
Prevalence and risk factors of child neglect in the general population. 
From a Canadian phone survey of mothers and fathers of children between 6 months and 15 years, the prevalence of neglect varied between 20.6% and 29.4% depending on children’s age. Factors noted by mothers related more to personal mental health problems, while fathers struggled more with living conditions.

Altamimi D, Almuneef M, Albuhairan F, Saleheen H. 
For 674 male and female Saudi students aged 12-19 years, various ACEs were associated with poor school performance.

Adult Manifestations of Child Abuse

Madigan S, Wade M, Plamondon A, Maguire JL, Jenkins JM. 
Maternal Adverse Childhood Experience and Infant Health: Biomedical and Psychosocial Risks as Intermediary Mechanisms. 
For 501 Canadian maternal-infant pairs followed from birth for 18 months, maternal personal ACE score of 4 or more was associated with a 2-5 times increased risk of biomedical risk (prenatal and perinatal complications) and psychosocial risk (depression, partner violence). In turn, biomedical risk was associated with child physical health problems, and psychosocial risk with child emotional problems. In this way, maternal ACEs can confer vulnerability to the next generation.

Balch MS, Loomis J. 
Enhancing Care Models to Capture Psychological Trauma. 
“Toxic levels of stress in childhood are an ongoing threat to public health...Developmental trauma leads to increased use of medical, social, correctional, and mental health services...academic difficulties, poor health, and low economic productivity in adulthood...A wide range of care providers, from the emergency department to subspecialties, should consider enhancing their typical models of care to include the special needs of traumatized children and the adults they become.”

Tyrka AR, Ridout KK, Parade SH. 
Childhood adversity and epigenetic regulation of glucocorticoid signaling genes: Associations in children and adults. 
Review of recent research on the epigenetic mechanisms (changes to DNA) of how early childhood experiences alter the physiologic response to stress.

Nusslock R, Miller GE. 
Early-Life Adversity and Physical and Emotional Health Across the Lifespan: A Neuroimmune Network Hypothesis. 
Authors propose a neuroimmune network hypothesis as a framework for organizing knowledge and generating integrative research relating to the health problems associated with childhood adversity.

Berens AE, Jensen SKG, Nelson CA 3rd. 
Biological embedding of childhood adversity: from physiological mechanisms to clinical implications. 
This review surveys evidence of potential molecular mechanisms by which early adversity becomes “biologically embedded” in altered physiology across body systems, and calls on researchers, clinicians, policymakers and other practitioners to act upon this evidence.
Psychological Mechanisms Mediating Effects Between Trauma and Psychotic Symptoms: The Role of Affect Regulation, Intrusive Trauma Memory, Beliefs, and Depression.  
Schizophr Bull. 2016 Jul;42 Suppl 1:S34-43. PMID: 27460616  
For 228 British adults experiencing psychosis (loss of touch with reality), 74.1% reported victimization trauma, and 21.5% met criteria for PTSD. There were specific associations between childhood sexual abuse and auditory hallucinations, and childhood emotional abuse and delusions (erroneous beliefs, such as being persecuted).

Paterniti S, Sterner I, Caldwell C, Bisserbe JC.  
Childhood neglect predicts the course of major depression in a tertiary care sample: a follow-up study.  
BMC Psychiatry. 2017 Mar 28;17(1):113. PMID: 28351403  
In this longitudinal study of 238 individuals with a current episode of major depression, childhood emotional and physical neglect predicted a slower time to remission, and more recurrences. “This suggests the importance of investigating the presence of childhood maltreatment in the clinical assessment of patients with major depressive disorder to identify individuals at risk of poorer prognosis.”

Epperson CN, Sammel MD, Bale TL, et al.  
Adverse Childhood Experiences and Risk for First-Episode Major Depression During the Menopause Transition.  
For 243 women in an aging study, women reporting 2 or more ACEs were 2.05 times more likely to have experienced lifetime major depression and 2.58 times more likely to report depression at the onset of menopause than women reporting 0 ACEs.

Adolescents

Weisz AN, Black BM, Hawley AC.  
Violence Vict. 2017 Apr 1;32(2):311-325. PMID: 28130900  
529 Midwestern US parents were asked how they would respond to a daughter victimized by adolescent dating violence. Most viewed the situation as serious, “meriting deeper discussions with the daughter, boyfriend or his parents. Many planned to handle the incident by trying to end the relationship, talking to the boyfriend, or informing the daughter about ADV.” These findings can help prevention workers help parents modulate their responses to increase effective communication with adolescents.

Smith-Darden JP, Reidy DE, Kernsmith PD.  
Adolescent stalking and risk of violence.  
From surveys of 1236 adolescents, 3 classes of stalkers were found: non-perpetrators, hyper-intimate pursuit, and comprehensive stalking. Stalking for both males and females was associated with multiple forms of violence perpetrated against multiple types of victims, not just the object of their infatuation.

Choi H, Van Ouytsel J, Temple JR.  
Association between sexting and sexual coercion among female adolescents.  
For 450 ethnically diverse female adolescents, “Offline sexual coercion was significantly associated with online sending and being asked for a naked image, as well as receiving a naked image without giving permission. The results suggest that sexting could function as an online extension of offline forms of sexual coercion.”

Domestic Violence – Effects on Children

Measures of Maternal Stress and Mood in Relation to Preterm Birth.  
Obstet Gynecol. 2016 Mar;127(3):545-52. PMID: 26855101  
For 90 healthy women followed in prenatal clinic, 12% had spontaneous preterm birth or premature rupture of membranes. Higher perceived stress in the second trimester was associated both with elevated second-trimester hair cortisol level (stress hormone) and preterm birth.

Eagen-Torkko M, Low LK, Zielinski R, Seng JS.  
Prevalence and Predictors of Breastfeeding After Childhood Abuse.  
For women experiencing their first pregnancies from 3 mid-western clinics, “Posttraumatic stress disorder is more important than childhood maltreatment trauma history in determining likelihood of breastfeeding success.”
Maguire DJ, Taylor S, Armstrong K, et. al.  
**Long-Term Outcomes of Infants with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome.**  
Review of potential long-term effects of prenatal exposure to methadone, and the importance of early intervention programs.

Overbeek MM, De Schipper JC, Willemen AM, et. al.  
**Mediators and Treatment Factors in Intervention for Children Exposed to Interpential Violence.**  
In comparing interventions for children exposed to IPV and their parents, improvement in parental mental health seemed to be the most important factor in improving children’s coping/symptoms, rather than trauma treatment for children.

Dayton CJ, Huth-Bocks AC, Busuito A.  
**The influence of interpersonal aggression on maternal perceptions of infant emotions: Associations with early parenting quality.**  
From a study of 120 women during their pregnancy and into toddlerhood, a personal history of maternal child abuse or IPV were associated with “a maternal tendency to view ambiguous infant facial expressions as negative, and in turn with less parenting sensitivity over time.”

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### Domestic Violence – Mental Health

Roberts AL, Koenen KC, Chen Q, et. al.  
**Posttraumatic stress disorder and accelerated aging: PTSD and leukocyte telomere length in a sample of civilian women.**  
Depress Anxiety. 2017 May;34(5):391-400. PMID: 28380289  
Using a subset of data from the Nurses’ Health Study II, women with PTSD were found to have shortened telomeres (a sign of cellular aging) regardless of health behaviors, medical conditions or type of trauma exposure.

### Elder/Dependent Adult Abuse

Evans CS, Hunold KM, Rosen T, Platts-Mills TF.  
**Diagnosis of Elder Abuse in U.S. Emergency Departments.**  
From a national sample database of ED visits recorded in 2012, of 6,723,667 ED visits of older adults (representing over 29 million ED visits), elder abuse was diagnosed in 0.013%. The most common abuse diagnoses were neglect (32.9%) and physical abuse (32.2%). “The proportion of U.S. ED visits by older adults receiving a diagnosis of elder abuse is at least two orders of magnitude lower than the estimated prevalence in the population.”

Sood R, Novotny P, Faubion SS, et. al.  
**Self-reported verbal abuse in 1300+ older women within a private, tertiary women’s health clinic.**  
From questionnaires at a private tertiary women’s health clinic, of 1389 women with a median age of 55 years, 7% reported IPV verbal abuse, 1% physical abuse, and <1% sexual abuse within the past year.

Gironda MW, Nguyen AL, Mosqueda LM.  
**Is This Broken Bone Because of Abuse? Characteristics and Comorbid Diagnoses in Older Adults with Fractures.**  
For 652 individuals aged 65 and over with a primary diagnosis of any fracture during a 3 year period, dementia, seeking care in the ED (vs. outpatient clinics), and fracture of the back, head and face were associated with correlates of abuse.
Mosqueda L, Burnight K, Gironda MW, et al. 
The Abuse Intervention Model: A Pragmatic Approach to Intervention for Elder Mistreatment. 
J Am Geriatr Soc. 2016 Sep;64(9):1879-83. PMID: 27550723

Sexual Assault

US Department of Justice 
National Best Practices for Sexual Assault Kits 2017 

Crawford-Jakubiak JE, Alderman EM, Leventhal JM 
Care of the Adolescent After an Acute Sexual Assault. 
Pediatrics. 2017 Mar;139(3). pii: e20164243. PMID: 28242861

Updated policy statement from the American Academy of Pediatrics on the acute assessment and care of adolescent victims of sexual assault.

Alix S, Cossette L, Hébert M, Cyr M, Frappier JY. 
Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Suicidal Ideation Among Sexually Abused Adolescent Girls: The Mediating Role of Shame. 

For 147 sexually abused adolescent girls, 66% reported PTSD symptoms, 53% depressive symptoms, and 46% suicidal thoughts in the past 3 months. Shame was found to be an important factor in PTSD symptoms and suicidality, and may be a crucial target for intervention.

Spiegel DR, Shaukat AM, Mccroskey AL, et al. 
Conceptualizing a subtype of patients with chronic pain: The necessity of obtaining a history of sexual abuse. 

15-25% of the female population experiences lifetime sexual abuse, and survivors frequently report chronic pain. 8-30% of patients with chronic non-cancer pain receive opioids. This article discusses the association between survivors of sexual assault, chronic pain and treatment strategies.

Tani KM. 
An administrative right to be free from sexual violence? 
Title IX enforcement in historical and institutional perspective. 

Legal discussion of the context in which the authority under Title IX protects against sexual assault on college campuses.

Human Trafficking

Access to, and experiences of, healthcare services by trafficked people: findings from a mixed-methods study in England. 
Br J Gen Pract. 2016 Nov;66(652):e794-e801. PMID: 27672141

From interviews with 136 trafficked people in the UK, 29% reported domestic servitude, 30% sexual exploitation, and 38% labor exploitation. “Many responders reported that traffickers restricted access to health services, accompanied them, or interpreted for them during consultations. Requirements to present identity documents to register for care, along with poor access to interpreters, were barriers to care during and after trafficking.”

Pocock NS, Kiss L, Oram S, Zimmerman C. 

Males comprise nearly 2/3 of trafficked and forced laborers worldwide. Using data from 446 men and boys in Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam, average work hours were 12-19 hours/day and 80% received no rest breaks. 35.5% had been injured on the job, and 37.8% experienced severe violence.
Cultural Concerns


In a study of White and Mexican-American heterosexual newlyweds, IPV victimization was associated with wives’ increased distress, and white male perpetrators’ decreased distress but Mexican American male perpetrators’ increased distress. “The association between IPV victimization and relationship distress may not only differ by gender but also by ethnicity.”

Perpetrators


Of 372 individuals in treatment for sexual offending, only 20% tried to talk to anyone about their sexual interests prior to their arrest. “Barriers to seeking and receiving psychological services included concerns about confidentiality, fears of social and legal consequences, personal shame or confusion about the problem, affordability, and challenges finding competent therapists who were adequately equipped to help them.”

Police and Court Systems


Updated policy statement from the American Academy of Pediatrics to reduce secondary traumatization and long term consequences for the over 100,000 children who appear in court each year in the US, providing testimony about violence they have experienced or witnessed.

Providers


Review of research on effective treatments for trauma in children and adolescents since the last research review from this journal in 2008.


From a national survey of Family Medicine faculty and residents with a 61% response, the majority reported their level of competence in diagnosing childhood maltreatment as average or below average. Barriers to diagnosis included inexperience, lack of confidence, lack of diagnostic protocol, lack of confidence in communicating with parents, and inadequate training.


Analyzing 21 years of data on female sexual offenders found four groupings – solo, coed pairs, all-female groups, and multiple perpetrator groups. These groups showed significant differences in offender, victim and crime context.
Goldstein E, Athale N, Sciolla AF, Catz SL.
Patient Preferences for Discussing Childhood Trauma in Primary Care.
Perm J. 2017;21. PMID: 28333604
83% of 178 adult underserved primarily Latino primary care patients agreed to participate in a study to ask about traumatic experiences. 37% screened positive for PTSD, 42% reported 4 or more ACEs, and 26% reported high on both measures. 79% reported being comfortable being asked about ACEs by clinicians, 85.5% with letting clinicians know the results of the ACE survey, and 69.7% with including results of the ACE survey in their medical record.

Sprague S, Slobogean GP, Spurr H, et. al.
A Scoping Review of Intimate Partner Violence Screening Programs for Health Care Professionals.
Review of studies evaluating IPV identification programs in health care settings showed mainly positive results, but they were not able to assess whether identification prevented future episodes of abuse. The heterogeneity of the studies also made it difficult to make clear recommendations as to optimal methods of screening.

Sampson M, Read J.
Are mental health staff getting better at asking about abuse and neglect?
A random chart review of 4 community mental health centers in New Zealand was compared to one done in 1997. Results showed significant increases in asking about child sexual and physical abuse and adult sexual assault, but not adult physical assault or childhood physical or emotional neglect. Male patients were asked less often than females, and male staff asked less often than female staff.

Berry KM, Rutledge CM.
Factors That Influence Women to Disclose Sexual Assault History to Health Care Providers.
Of 143 women taking an online survey, only 28.7% had been screened for sexual assault by a healthcare professional. 82.5% reported intentions to disclose sexual assault to a provider if asked, whereas only 24.6% would voluntarily disclose. Provider attitude and demeanor were the main barriers to disclosure.

LoGiudice JA.
A Systematic Literature Review of the Childbearing Cycle as Experienced by Survivors of Sexual Abuse.
“This systematic review offers women’s health care providers a thorough evaluation of the state of the science on survivors’ childbearing experiences. The literature shows that lack of control, dissociation, and flashbacks are common themes.”

van der Kolk BA, Hodgdon H, Gapen M, et. al.
A Randomized Controlled Study of Neurofeedback for Chronic PTSD.
In this study of 52 individuals with chronic PTSD, neurofeedback training showed improvement in PTSD symptoms compared to controls, and comparable to effects reported for other effective PTSD treatments.

Winters DE Msw, Beerbower E Msw.
Mindfulness and meditation as an adjunctive treatment for adolescents involved in the juvenile justice system: Is repairing the brain and nervous system possible?
“This article explores adolescent brain development, the unique difficulties that juvenile justice youth face, and mindfulness meditation as an adjunctive treatment to system-based treatment. Mindfulness meditation may be a way to redress damage to the brain and facilitate healthy brain development, thus impacting prosocial behavior.”

Prevention

Dias MS, Rottmund CM, Cappos KM, et. al.
Association of a Postnatal Parent Education Program for Abusive Head Trauma With Subsequent Pediatric Abusive Head Trauma Hospitalization Rates.
Over a ten year period when a parental education intervention to reduce child abusive head trauma was required in Pennsylvania hospitals, only 5.7% of parents were exposed to the entire intervention (brochure, video, discussion with nurse and signing a commitment form). Although the majority of parents self-reported gains in knowledge, the rate of child abusive head trauma in the state did not decrease.
Researchers

CDC
Using Essential Elements to Select, Adapt, and Evaluate Violence Prevention Approaches 2017

From an ongoing study, there were substantial differences in report of ACEs from caregivers and from children prospectively and retrospectively.

Other of Interest

In a survey of 34,144 US veterinarians about animal abuse, only 3.5% returned the survey, with the majority stating that they were unaware of the current status of laws in their state regarding animal abuse reporting.

In India, half of the population lacks sanitary facilities. In this national study, women who used open toileting were twice as likely to face non-partner sexual violence as those with a household toilet.

From a Danish work survey of 7650 adults, the odds of long-term sickness absence were almost 2 times increased by workplace bullying, and 1.5 times increased from unwanted sexual attention. (These results were minimally influenced by poor sleep.)

In a CDC analysis, homicide is one of the leading causes of death of women aged 44 or less. 55.3% of these homicides were IPV related, with 18.3% homicide/suicide. 11.2% experienced some form of partner violence in the month preceding death, and arguments and jealousy were the most common precipitants. Highest rates were found in non-Hispanic Blacks (4.4/100,000 population) and American Indian/Alaska Native (4.3) vs. Hispanic (1.8), White (1.5), and Asian/Pacific Islanders (1.2). 1/3 of victims had attended some college or more, and 15% were pregnant or less than 6 weeks postpartum. Firearms were used in 53.9%; sharp instruments in 19.8%; and hanging, suffocation or strangulation in 10.5%. 79.2% were current and 14.3% former partners. Strategies to prevent these homicides include: lethality assessments by first responders, limitation of firearms for persons with a restraining order, bystander programs, healthcare screening, teaching healthy relationship skills, addressing neighborhood factors such as poverty and low social cohesion, and reducing barriers to care caused by health inequities such as language.