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Child Abuse and Covid-19

Bryant DJ, Oo M, Damian AJ.

The rise of adverse childhood experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Psychol Trauma. 2020 Aug;12(S1):S193-S194. PMID: [32551773](#)

“At some point this pandemic will end, and when it does, the public health response must include consideration for this increase in adversity that so many children will potentially experience and the ways that they were cut off from resiliency building supports...we must marshal resources to assure that a generation of children does not experience more of what a childhood marked by these experiences can bring over the life course—depression, anxiety, substance use disorder, suicide, cancer, diabetes, heart disease, poverty, and early death. We may not be able to stop this abuse from occurring; indeed, it is happening right now. But we have the tools to mitigate the consequences of this abuse if we attend to it as soon as society is able and choose not to turn a blind eye to the things that happened behind closed and quarantined doors during the coronavirus pandemic.”

Humphreys KL, Myint MT, Zeanah CH.

Increased Risk for Family Violence During the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Pediatrics. 2020 Jul;146(1). pii: e20200982. PMID: [32317306](#)

Recommendations for clinicians

- Make violence potential part of every assessment.
- Inquire about family stress levels and how parents manage stress.
- Inquire about the coparenting relationship.
- Inquire about social supports available to and being used by the family.
- Inquire about substance use and any recent increases.
- Look for signs of stress, irritability, or depression in the parent.
- Look for harsh responses to child behaviors in parents.
- Look for signs of fearfulness or dysregulation in children.
- Look for indicators of controlling behaviors by one partner.
- Identify families who are more at risk for violence based on previous encounters and conduct check-ins if there are no scheduled appointments for them in the near-term to reduce the likelihood that otherwise high-risk families would be undetected.

Recommendations to make to parents

- Recognize that feelings of stress, anger, worry, and irritability are expected given the demands of care of young children, especially if coupled with job demands, income loss, or job uncertainty.
 - Use consistent wake, bed, and mealtimes to provide structure for both children and parents.
 - Consider structuring the day in specific segments, for example, reading, inside or outside playtime, naptime, exercise, screen time, etc.
 - If 2 parents are home, consider a “tag team” approach to child care.
 - Understand that increases in children’s challenging behaviors and limit testing are developmentally typical responses that likely reflect distress and disruptions from typical routines.
 - Identify when feeling activated and use a coping strategy that helps (eg, deep breaths, considering the things that they are grateful for), and if those do not help, institute a household “quiet time” for rest.
 - Develop a plan to call a friend or family member to avoid engaging in violent behaviors.
 - Use reliable resources for parenting during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as www.healthychildren.org and <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/parent-caregiver-guide-to-helping-families-cope-with-the-coronavirus-disease-2019>.
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Wong CA, Ming D, Maslow G, Gifford EJ.

Mitigating the Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic Response on At-Risk Children.

Pediatrics. 2020 Jul;146(1):e20200973. PMID: [32317311](#)

Article discusses risks and policy for “mitigation strategies for 3 at-risk subpopulations of children: (1) children with behavioral health needs, (2) children in foster care or at risk for maltreatment, and (3) children with medical complexity.”

Levine C.

Vulnerable Children in a Dual Epidemic.

Hastings Cent Rep. 2020 May;50(3):69-71. PMID: [32596909](#)

“Two epidemics--Covid-19 and opioid use disorder (OUD)--are creating short- and long-term mental and physical health risks for vulnerable children and adolescents...Although not officially designated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as “adverse childhood experiences” (“ACEs”)...It is important to recognize and meet the needs of all these children now and not just when the long-term consequences become apparent.”

Ghosh R, Dubey MJ, Chatterjee S, Dubey S.

Impact of COVID -19 on children: special focus on the psychosocial aspect.

Minerva Pediatr. 2020 Jun;72(3):226-235. PMID: [32613821](#)

“School closure, lack of outdoor activity, aberrant dietary and sleeping habits are likely to disrupt children's usual lifestyle and can potentially promote monotony, distress, impatience, annoyance and varied neuropsychiatric manifestations. Incidences of domestic violence, child abuse, adulterated online contents are on the rise. Children of single parent and frontline workers suffer unique problems. The children from marginalized communities are particularly susceptible...may suffer from extended ill-consequences of this pandemic, such as child labor, child trafficking, child marriage, sexual exploitation and death.”

Child Abuse

Morris MC, Marco M, Bailey B, Ruiz E, Im W, Goodin B.

Opioid prescription rates and risk for substantiated child abuse and neglect: A Bayesian spatiotemporal analysis.

Drug Alcohol Depend. 2019 Dec 1;205:107623. PMID: [31698321](#)

Using multiple sets of Tennessee county-level data, “Higher opioid prescribing rates were associated with greater risk for substantiated child abuse and neglect across Tennessee counties.”

Quast T, Bright MA, Delcher C.

The relationship between foster care entries and high-dose opioid prescribing in California.

Addict Behav. 2019 Jun;93:52-58. PMID: [30685568](#)

“We found a positive association between the rate of child removals and the rate of residents who were cumulatively prescribed a high dose of opioids.” One standard deviation in this rate was associated with a 9% increase in child removal rate.

Howell S, Bailey L, Coffman J.

Evaluation of drug-endangered children: The yield of toxicology and skeletal survey screening.

Child Abuse Negl. 2019 Oct;96:104081. PMID: [31344584](#)

Over a 6 year period, 1252 cases were referred by CPS to a child abuse team for possible drug endangerment. Of 1150 case in which hair toxicology was performed, 52% tested positive for at least one illegal substance, most frequently methamphetamine followed by marijuana and cocaine. Of 340 skeletal surveys performed, 4% had skeletal injuries, none of which had skin findings. “Skeletal survey screening to those children referred for drug endangerment is useful in identifying children with physical abuse.”

Notrica DM, Sayrs LW, Kirsch L, et. al.

Inflicted versus unintentional injury: towards improved detection and surveillance of supervisory neglect.

J Pediatr Surg. 2020 Feb;55(2):341-345. PMID: [31784100](#)

Of 376 children seen for a fall injury felt to be non-inflicted and due to supervisory neglect, supervisory neglect was associated with mechanism of injury consistent with the injury, no loss of consciousness, no bruising away from the injury site, and direct hospital presentation. Four types of supervisory neglect were noted: interrupted supervision (53.4%), failure to adapt the home (26.7%), safety equipment non-compliance (12.8%), and inadequate substitute care (7.0%).

Mesman GR, Harper SL, Edge NA, Brandt TW, Pemberton JL.

Problematic Sexual Behavior in Children.

J Pediatr Health Care. 2019 May - Jun;33(3):323-331. PMID: [30661866](#)

Authors discuss childhood sexual development, differentiation between problematic and normative sexual behaviors, and counseling of parents. “Research suggests that the development of problematic sexual behavior is related to a variety of child, family, developmental, and social factors. Recommendations for clinical care for this population are offered, and a case study highlights a health care professional's appropriate assessment and decision making.”

Wamser-Nanney R, Campbell CL.

Children's sexual behavior problems: An ecological model using the LONGSCAN data.

Child Abuse Negl. 2019 Oct;96:104085. PMID: [31377532](#)

For 1,112 8-year-old children, sexual behavior problems were associated with "child's living arrangement, child's aggressive behaviors and posttraumatic stress symptoms (PTSS), sexual and physical abuse, caregiver's psychological difficulties, and children's perceptions of family health."

Freeman M.

Child Sexual Abuse and Differential Diagnoses: A Case Report.

J Pediatr Health Care. 2019 Mar-Apr;33(2):201-205. PMID: [30616876](#)

Case report and detailed differential diagnosis and management for a child experiencing sexual abuse but presenting to primary care with mild nonspecific genital symptoms.

Kleinschmidt A.

Child Maltreatment Red Flags: Two Cases of Bruising in Premobile Infants.

J Pediatr Health Care. 2019 Jan;33(1):92-96. PMID: [30190186](#)

Two case presentations "show the importance of recognizing sentinel injuries and red flags for maltreatment in young, premobile infants with unexplained bruises."

Jackson DB, Vaughn MG.

Obesogenic food consumption among young children: the role of maltreatment.

Public Health Nutr. 2019 Jul;22(10):1840-1849. PMID: [30767817](#)

Using data from a fragile families study, "Child maltreatment consistently emerged as one of the strongest predictors of obesogenic food consumption...physical maltreatment plays a particularly important role...child maltreatment prevention efforts should seek to diminish unhealthy eating practices among children."

Fisher MH, Epstein RA, Urbano RC, et. al.

A population-based examination of maltreatment referrals and substantiation for children with autism spectrum disorder.

Autism. 2019 Jul;23(5):1335-1340. PMID: [30523699](#)

"Significantly more children with autism spectrum disorder (17.3%) than without (7.4%) were referred to the Child Abuse Hotline. Children with autism spectrum disorder were less likely than children without autism spectrum disorder to have referrals screened in for further action, but substantiated maltreatment rates were similar across groups

(3.9% vs 3.4%, respectively). Girls versus boys with autism spectrum disorder were more likely to have substantiated maltreatment (13.6% vs 1.9%, respectively)."

Gartland MG, Hidalgo JA, Danaher FS.

Case 20-2020: A 7-Year-Old Girl with Severe Psychological Distress after Family Separation.

N Engl J Med. 2020 Jun 25;382(26):2557-2565. PMID: [32579817](#)

Case report using a trauma-informed approach for a forensic medical evaluation and treatment of a 7 year-old diagnosed with PTSD from parental separation during asylum-seeking. Good review of effects of trauma on children.

Table 3. Four Phases of Treatment for Children and Adolescents with Trauma.*

| |
|--|
| Ensure safety in the patient's environment, including the home, school, and community |
| Develop skills for emotional regulation and interpersonal functioning; may include use of medication |
| Make meaning of past traumatic events so the patient may have more positive, adaptive views about himself or herself in the present and have hope about the future |
| Enhance resiliency and integration into a social network |

* Data are from the National Child Trauma Stress Network.²⁵ In general, it is important to approach the treatment sequentially to ensure that the child has sufficient emotional regulation and safety to face traumatic memories with a sense of mastery. In practice, clinicians routinely return to earlier phases of treatment when new challenges arise.

Adult Manifestations of Child Abuse

Kascakova N, Furstova J, Hasto J, et. al.

The Unholy Trinity: Childhood Trauma, Adulthood Anxiety, and Long-Term Pain.

Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2020 Jan 8;17(2). pii: E414. PMID: [31936285](#)

From surveys of Czech adults from the general public as well as from a clinic population being seen for stress, reporting anxiety and pain as adults was associated with a higher prevalence of childhood emotional and physical abuse and neglect.

Kaufman J, Torbey S.

Child maltreatment and psychosis.

Neurobiol Dis. 2019 Nov;131:104378. PMID: [30685353](#)

"This paper reviews the literature on the association between experiences of child abuse and neglect and the development of psychoses. It then explores the premise that psychotic patients with a history of maltreatment may comprise a clinically and biological distinct subgroup."

Christie AJ, Matthews KA.

Childhood Poly-victimization Is Associated with Elevated Body Mass Index and Blunted Cortisol Stress Response in College Women.

Ann Behav Med. 2019 May 3;53(6):563-572. PMID: [30169815](#)

Of almost 100 healthy college women, those with childhood polyvictimization (2-5 types of violent childhood exposure vs. 0) had significantly higher body mass index (BMI), and an abnormal response of stress hormones to a laboratory stressor. In addition, the more frequent the violence exposure, the higher the BMI.

Miller-Graff L, Howell KH, Scheid CR, Schaefer L.

"Violence is Everywhere": Childhood Polyvictimization, Perceptions of the Prevalence of Victimization, and Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms.

Violence Vict. 2019 Apr 1;34(2):376-393. PMID: [31019018](#)

From an online survey of 369 college students, childhood polyvictimization was significantly related to distorted views of the higher prevalence of victimization in the general public. This distorted view was also related to higher symptoms of hyperarousal in those with PTSD. "Intervention around perceptions of the prevalence of victimization may be useful for addressing symptoms of hyperarousal."

Lange BCL, Callinan LS, Smith MV.

Adverse Childhood Experiences and Their Relation to Parenting Stress and Parenting Practices.

Community Ment Health J. 2019 May;55(4):651-662. PMID: [30194589](#)

81 parenting women enrolled in a stress management class showed a significant dose-response relationship between higher parental ACE score and increased perceived parenting stress.

Lin HS, Naimi AI, Brooks MM, et. al.

Life-course impact of child maltreatment on midlife health-related quality of life in women.

Ann Epidemiol. 2020 Mar;43:58-65. PMID: [32127250](#)

For 342 midlife women, the 20% of whom reported 2 or more childhood maltreatment types also reported lower health-related quality of life. Low optimism, sleep problems, and low social support each contributed to the negative impact of childhood maltreatment, and could be targets of interventions.

Carson MY, Thurston RC.

Childhood abuse and vasomotor symptoms among midlife women.

Menopause. 2019 Oct;26(10):1093-1099. PMID: [31166306](#)

Of 295 nonsmoking perimenopausal and postmenopausal women, those with a history of childhood physical or sexual abuse had approximately 1.5-2 times increased vasomotor symptoms (hot flashes) during sleep.

Adolescents

Jia Z, Wen X, Chen F, Zhu H, Li C, Lin Y, Xie X, Yuan Z.

Cumulative Exposure to Adverse Childhood Experience: Depressive Symptoms, Suicide Intentions and Suicide Plans among Senior High School Students in Nanchang City of China.

Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2020 Jun 30;17(13). pii: E4718. PMID: [32630073](#)

Of 884 Chinese high school students, during the past 12 months, 22.51% reported depressive symptoms, 14.14% suicidal intentions, and 6.22% had made suicide plans. Increasing ACE scores correlated with increasing risks for all categories.

Lachman P, Zweig J, Dank M, Yahner J.

Patterns of Help-Seeking Behavior Among Victims of Teen Dating Violence and Abuse: Variations Among Boys and Girls.

J Sch Health. 2019 Oct;89(10):791-799. PMID: [31418170](#)

Of 3745 dating youth from 10 middle and high schools in the northeastern US, 59% reported some kind of dating abuse victimization. Only 9% reported seeking help, with female victims nearly 2 times more likely to seek help than male victims. Of those who sought help, overwhelmingly both males and females sought help from friends, with only 17% seeking help from school counselors and 13% from teachers.

Patchin JW, Hinduja S.

Sextortion Among Adolescents: Results From a National Survey of U.S. Youth.

Sex Abuse. 2020 Feb;32(1):30-54. PMID: [30264657](#)

"Sextortion is the threatened dissemination of explicit, intimate, or embarrassing images of a sexual nature without consent, usually for the purpose of procuring additional images, sexual acts, money, or something else...Among a nationally representative sample of 5,568 U.S. middle and high school students, approximately 5% reported that they had been the victim of sextortion, while about 3% admitted to threatening others who had shared an image with them in confidence. Youth who threatened others with sextortion were more likely to have been victims themselves."

Domestic Violence – Effects on Children

Randell KA, Ragavan MI.

Intimate Partner Violence: Identification and Response in Pediatric Health Care Settings.

Clin Pediatr (Phila). 2020 Feb;59(2):109-115. PMID: [31585503](#)

“Childhood exposure to IPV is a common occurrence with lifelong negative consequences. Pediatric health care settings offer unique opportunities to address IPV. Through identification of IPV and a robust response to disclosure that includes partnering with IPV advocacy resources, clinicians can connect families to resources that assist survivors to achieve safety for themselves and their children.”

Table 2. Possible Symptoms of Child Exposure to Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)^a.

| Age Group | Possible Symptoms |
|-------------|--|
| Infants | Fussiness Inconsolable crying Developmental delay Changes to eating/sleeping patterns Failure to thrive |
| Toddlers | Frequent tantrums Easy frustration Difficulty separating Developmental delay Difficulty sleeping Abdominal pain, headaches Failure to thrive |
| School age | School difficulties Abdominal pain, headaches Depression, anxiety Changes to eating patterns Insomnia or hypersomnia Hyperactivity |
| Adolescents | Enuresis Abdominal pain, headaches Schools difficulties Isolation, depression, anxiety Changes to eating patterns Insomnia or hypersomnia Substance use Self-harm |

^a(1) This list is not exhaustive. (2) IPV exposure should be part of a broader differential diagnosis for children who present with the above-mentioned symptoms.

Domestic Violence – Physical Health

Geary S, Graham LM, Moracco KE, et. al.

Intimate Partner Homicides in North Carolina: 2011-2015.

N C Med J. 2020 Jul-Aug;81(4):228-235. PMID: [32641454](#)

Of the 2,299 homicides that occurred in North Carolina 2011-2015, 350 were intimate partner homicides (IPH), of which 72.3% were female. Among all female homicides, 48.2% were IPH, while only 5.4% of all male homicides were IPHs. The highest rate of IPH occurred among women aged 20-44, with the most, 54.0%, being white. However rates for American Indians and Blacks were 1.8 and 2.0 times the rate for Whites. Most victims, 86.5% male and 82.6% female, were the suspect’s current partner. Firearms were the most common weapon used (62.6%).

Porter A, Montgomery CO, Montgomery BE, et. al.

Intimate Partner Violence-Related Fractures in the United States: An 8 Year Review.

J Fam Violence. 2019 Oct;34(7):601-609. PMID: [32595265](#)

Of 1352 records identified with an IPV-related fracture, 83% were women and the mean age was 37.5 years. Facial fractures were recorded more in the younger population 18-39 years, while rib and thigh bone fractures were more common among survivors aged 60+.

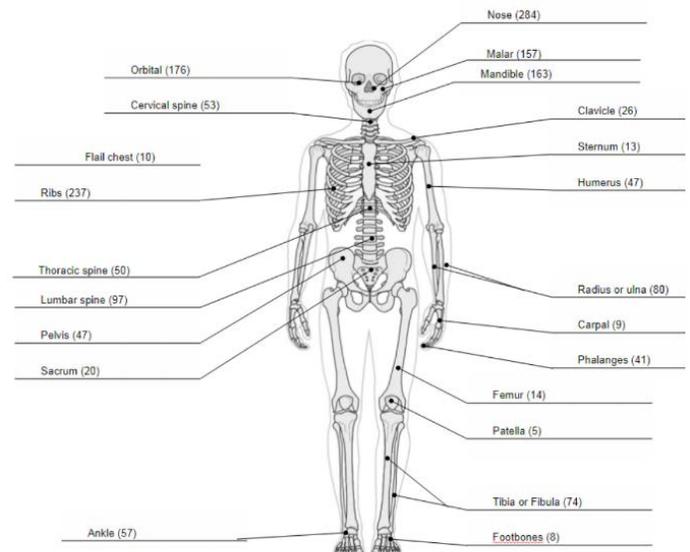


Figure 1. Location and number of IPV-related fractures.

Elder/Dependent Adult Abuse

Gardner W, States D, Bagley N.

The Coronavirus and the Risks to the Elderly in Long-Term Care.

J Aging Soc Policy. 2020 Jul-Oct;32(4-5):310-315. PMID: [32245346](#)

During the pandemic, “Policies should also be developed to ensure that long term care facilities (LTC) remain adequately staffed and that infection control protocols are closely followed. Family will not be able to visit LTC facilities, increasing isolation and vulnerability to abuse and neglect.”

Bornstein RF.

Synergistic dependencies in partner and elder abuse.

Am Psychol. 2019 Sep;74(6):713-724. PMID: [30829502](#)

“When family member caregivers are economically dependent on a functionally dependent older adult, risk for elder abuse increases...The interpersonal, economic, and functional dependencies of abused partners and older adults are associated with feelings of helplessness, powerlessness, and an inability to challenge the abuser. The common dependency-related dynamic in perpetrators of abuse is fear-fear of abandonment leading to partner abuse, and fear of loss of financial support increasing risk for elder abuse.”

LGBTQ Concerns

Silliman Cohen RI, Bosk EA.

Vulnerable Youth and the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Pediatrics. 2020 Jul;146(1):e20201306. PMID: [32345686](#)

“During regular telemedicine appointments with LGBTQ youth, youth with substance use disorders, youth in foster care, and those at risk for maltreatment, providers should routinely ask about exposure to abuse, household violence, resource instability, and mental health during medical evaluations of any format. Providers should be attuned to the increased risk for maltreatment in the context of economic and material stressors...In addition, providers should be aware that it is sometimes difficult to ensure privacy with telemedicine practices. For instance, using correct pronouns or names or making reference to patients’ LGBTQ identities may put them at risk for additional harm.”

Race/Cultural Concerns

Holliday CN, Morse SM, Irvin NA, et. al.

Concept Mapping: Engaging Urban Men to Understand Community Influences on Partner Violence Perpetration.

J Urban Health. 2019 Feb;96(1):97-111. PMID: [30051239](#)

Using concept mapping, wherein participants generate ideas around an issue, with 28 primarily young Black men living in Baltimore and enrolled in an abuse intervention program, “‘No hope for the future’ was the greatest contributor to IPV perpetration. ‘Socioeconomic struggles’ (i.e., lack of employment) and ‘Life in Baltimore’ (i.e., homicide) were most likely to result in stress. Having good support systems (i.e., family, community centers) were felt to prevent IPV and reduce stress.”

Offiong A, Powell TW, Lewis Q, Smith B, Prioleau M.

"I missed open arms": The Need for Connectedness among Black Youth Affected by Parental Drug Use.

Child Youth Serv Rev. 2020 Jul;114. pii: 105072. PMID: [32606485](#)

From focus groups of Black youth and parents with drug misuse, and service providers, 3 themes emerged: 1) missing parental connections; 2) the desire for consistent, trusted adults (many extended family members and community mentors stepped in); and 3) the consequences of missed connections, including increased involvement in risky behaviors, fewer basic necessities, and a missed childhood.

Joe A, McElwain C, Woodard K, Bell S.

A Call for Culturally-Relevant Interventions to Address Child Abuse and Neglect in American Indian Communities.

J Racial Ethn Health Disparities. 2019 Jun;6(3):447-456. PMID: [30264334](#)

“The American Indian population has the highest rate of child abuse and neglect in the country. Yet, there is a paucity of child abuse interventions available.” Authors review existing research and propose interventions culturally specific for American Indian families.

Perera C, Salamanca-Sanabria A, Caballero-Bernal J, et. al.

No implementation without cultural adaptation.

Confl Health. 2020 Jul 14;14:46. PMID: [32684948](#)

Using a structured system to culturally adapt an intervention that included input from local experts resulted in protocols that “differed from the original format in their focus on the problems unique to these population groups, the way that psychological distress is expressed in this context, and the inclusion of locally available supports.”

Sexual Assault

AMSSM Sexual Violence in Sport Task Force, et. al.
Sexual Violence in Sport: American Medical Society for Sports Medicine Position Statement.

Sports Health. 2020 Jul/Aug;12(4):352-354. PMID: [32510278](#)
Position statement “to raise awareness of this critical issue among sports medicine physicians and to declare a commitment to engage in collaborative, multidisciplinary solutions to reduce sexual violence in sport.”

Moll Tudurí C, Salgado García EJ, Santana Moreno D, et. al.
Emergency department visits for transient global amnesia alone or in association with substance abuse.

Emergencias. 2019 Oct;31(5):341-345. PMID: [31625306](#)
Transient global amnesia (TGA) was first described in 1956 and is characterized by a brief and abrupt loss of memory, with identity and consciousness preserved, without evidence of brain trauma or neurologic disease, and usually with recovery in 24 hours. In this series of 287 Spanish patients with TGA seen in one hospital emergency department, 58.9% were sexual assault victims, 19.5% were substance users, and 21.6% were neither.

Gil-Llario MD, Morell-Mengual V, Díaz-Rodríguez I, et. al.
Prevalence and sequelae of self-reported and other-reported sexual abuse in adults with intellectual disability.

J Intellect Disabil Res. 2019 Feb;63(2):138-148. PMID: [30328163](#)
Of 360 male and female Spanish adults with mild to moderate intellectual disability, “The prevalence of sexual abuse is 6.10% when it is self-reported and 28.6% when it is reported by professionals...these Individuals who have suffered documented cases of abuse are more likely to present encopresis [lack of bowel control], social isolation, self-harm and a higher number of suicide attempts.”

Stefanidou T, Hughes E, Kester K, et. al.
The identification and treatment of mental health and substance misuse problems in sexual assault services: A systematic review.

PLoS One. 2020 Apr 10;15(4):e0231260. PMID: [32275695](#)
“This review suggests that there is big variation in the mental health and substance misuse provision both across and within different sexual assault service models...Clearer guidance for service planners and commissioners, informed by robust evidence about optimal service organisations and pathways, is required.”

Gross GM, Kroll-Desrosiers A, Mattocks K.
A Longitudinal Investigation of Military Sexual Trauma and Perinatal Depression.

J Womens Health (Larchmt). 2020 Jan;29(1):38-45. PMID: [31560602](#)
Women veterans who have experiences military sexual trauma, and after controlling for demographic variables and prenatal stress, were at significantly higher risk of pre- and postpartum depression and suicidal ideation.

Andresen FJ, Monteith LL, Kugler J, Cruz RA, Blais RK.
Institutional betrayal following military sexual trauma is associated with more severe depression and specific posttraumatic stress disorder symptom clusters.

J Clin Psychol. 2019 Jul;75(7):1305-1319. PMID: [30947374](#)
For 69 female service members/veterans who reported experiencing military sexual trauma, institutional betrayal was significantly associated with more severe depression and PTSD symptoms.

Ceelen M, Dorn T, van Huis FS, Reijnders UJL.
Characteristics and Post-Decision Attitudes of Non-Reporting Sexual Violence Victims.

J Interpers Violence. 2019 May;34(9):1961-1977. PMID: [27402581](#)
Of 287 Dutch victims of sexual violence completing an anonymous online survey, 80% did not report the most recent sexual violence incident to the police. 65% of those who did not report in retrospect would have reported, with specific reasons for non-reporting including “lack of evidence” and “feelings of shame, guilt, and other emotions.”

Hamrick LA, Owens GP.
Exploring the mediating role of self-blame and coping in the relationships between self-compassion and distress in females following the sexual assault.

J Clin Psychol. 2019 Apr;75(4):766-779. PMID: [30552686](#)
From surveys of 207 female adults who had experienced sexual assault, higher self-compassion was associated with lower behavioral self-blame and disengagement coping, which, in turn, were associated with less PTSD. Higher self-compassion was also associated with less depression severity. “Clinicians working with sexual assault survivors may choose to augment treatment-as-usual with interventions designed to increase self-compassion.”

Human Trafficking

Talbott JMV, Dutcher JS, Pougner CA, et. al.

Review of Published Curriculum on Sex Trafficking for Undergraduate Medical Trainees.

Am J Prev Med. 2020 Apr;58(4):604-611. PMID: [32005592](#)

Detailed analysis of 11 resources providing educational materials relevant to medical students on sex trafficking.

Table 1. Description of Educational Content Themes¹⁶

| Trafficking: definition and scope | Definition of human trafficking, types of trafficking, examples of how, where, and why it occurs, description of extent of the problem locally or worldwide |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Health consequences | Adverse health effects (physical and psychological) that result from trafficking |
| Victim identification | "Red flags," "warning signs," or key indicators that might help a health professional identify a victim |
| Appropriate treatment | Suggestions for effective communication and provision of culturally sensitive or "trauma informed" care in the treatment of trafficking victims |
| Referral to services | Discussion of importation of liaising with nonhealth services (e.g., shelter, legal assistance) to meet the needs of victims or provide contact information for key resources |
| Legal issues | U.S. anti-trafficking legislation, medicolegal considerations (i.e., documentation in medical records, reporting of the abuse of minors, obtaining informed consent, patient confidentiality, and privacy), suggestions for health professionals when interacting with law enforcement |
| Security | Provisions for the safety of the trafficked person (and in some cases, health professionals) |
| Prevention | Ways in which health professionals can become involved in trafficking prevention activities |

Gezie LD, Worku A, Kebede Y, Gebeyehu A.

Sexual violence at each stage of human trafficking cycle and associated factors: a retrospective cohort study on Ethiopian female returnees via three major trafficking corridors.

BMJ Open. 2019 Jul 17;9(7):e024515. PMID: [31320341](#)

From surveys of 651 Ethiopian trafficked females when they returned home, the prevalence of sexual violence was estimated at 10% during predeparture, 35.0% during the travelling period, 58.1% at the destination, and 19.5% during detention stages. The odds of sexual violence among returnees aged 14-17 years was about twofold when compared with that of women aged 26-49 years.

Perpetrators

Saramago MA, Cardoso J, Leal I.

Victim Crossover Index Offending Patterns and Predictors in a Portuguese Sample.

Sex Abuse. 2020 Feb;32(1):101-124. PMID: [30238826](#)

Of 94 Portuguese males incarcerated for sex offences with multiple victims, 48% had victims of different age categories, 10% had both gendered victims, and 12% had intrafamilial and extrafamilial victims. Sexual offenders who perpetrate crossover usually have a greater number of victims and increased rates of sexual recidivism.

Police and Court Systems

Piel J.

Letter to the Editor-Behavioral Health Implications of Inmate Release During COVID-19.

J Forensic Sci. 2020 Jul;65(4):1379-1381. PMID: [32407545](#)

Due to Covid-19 concerns, there has been a recent push for decreasing the prison population, including detainees who are elderly or vulnerable to COVID-19, nonviolent offenders, those due for imminent release, and those whose sentences were commuted "a significant number of whom had alcohol- or drug-related offenses." Author points out needs of discharged inmates including heightened anxiety due to the pandemic and limited financial and social resources, management of mental illness, risk of substance use, risk of suicide, risk of domestic violence, and limited availability of and access to behavioral health resources.

Providers

Emezue C.

Digital or Digitally Delivered Responses to Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence During COVID-19.

JMIR Public Health Surveill. 2020 Jul 30;6(3):e19831. PMID: [32678797](#)

Description of DV mitigation approaches using emerging digital best practices to support survivors, their children, and abusers during stay-at-home advisories. Practical and useful information for agencies and clinicians. [Full text](#)

Hinesley J, Krist A.

A Primary Care Approach to Adverse Childhood Experiences.

Am Fam Physician. 2020 Jul 1;102(1):55-57. PMID: [32603065](#)
Using a case scenario, authors discuss identification of ACEs, assessing for health effects, and a treatment regimen that “may include a combination of counseling, medications, referral to specialists and community resources, and longitudinal support and follow-up...For patients who are pregnant or have children, physicians may want to consider the potential risk of adverse childhood experiences being passed to the next generation. Parents are often motivated to pursue their own treatment and change unhealthy behaviors that can cause adverse childhood experiences in an effort to protect their children and to improve the parent-child relationship.”

Hornor G, Davis C, Sherfield J, Wilkinson K.

Trauma-Informed Care: Essential Elements for Pediatric Health Care.

J Pediatr Health Care. 2019 Mar- Apr;33(2):214-221. PMID: [30777228](#)
Review of a tiered approach to trauma-informed pediatric care, including a review of medical and behavioral red flags.

Stevens NR, Holmgren L, Hobfoll SE, Cvengros JA.

Assessing Trauma History in Pregnant Patients: A Didactic Module and Role-Play for Obstetrics and Gynecology Residents.

MedEdPORTAL. 2020 Jul 20;16:10925. PMID: [32704539](#)
“How to” take a trauma-informed history in obstetric patients. [Full article plus slides and facilitator and trainee guides.](#)

Dagan Y, Yager J.

Posttraumatic Growth in Complex PTSD.

Psychiatry. 2019 Winter;82(4):329-344. PMID: [31404510](#)
“While much remains to be learned, encouraging and helping establish varieties of accepting, trusting and nurturing contacts in the real world and psychotherapy and introducing and exploring the concept of posttraumatic growth within therapy, can help patients suffering from complex PTSD.”

Fisher CA, Rudkin N, Withiel TD, et. al.

Assisting patients experiencing family violence: A survey of training levels, perceived knowledge, and confidence of clinical staff in a large metropolitan hospital.

Womens Health (Lond). 2020 Jan-Dec;16:1745506520926051. PMID: [32716732](#)
From a staff survey of a large metropolitan Australian hospital, “Sixty-five percent had received

some form of family violence training, mostly of short duration (1-3 h); 72% reported having little or no confidence working in the area...Longer duration training was associated with an increase in knowledge and confidence ratings. Thirty-four percent indicated that they did not know what to do when a patient disclosed experiencing family violence. The most commonly indicated barriers were suspected perpetrators being present, perceived reluctance of patients/clients to disclose when asked, and time limitations.”

Ballan MS, Freyer M.

Occupational Deprivation Among Female Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence Who Have Physical Disabilities.

Am J Occup Ther. 2020 Jul/Aug;74(4):7404345010p1-7404345010p7. PMID: [32602453](#)
Authors discuss the “educational, vocational, financial, and physical barriers to occupational engagement faced by IPV survivors with disabilities...can entrap women in abusive relationships, preventing them from independently supporting themselves and their children. Occupational therapy practitioners can provide education and interventions that increase their ability to live independently.”

COVID-19, domestic violence and abuse, and urgent dental and oral and maxillofacial surgery care.

Br Dent J. 2020 Jun;228(12):923-926. PMID: [32591703](#)
“DVA [domestic violence and abuse] physical injury most frequently involves the face. Dentists, dental care professionals, oral surgeons and oral and maxillofacial surgeons all have a critical part to play in identifying patients experiencing DVA, and in making referrals to specialist agencies.”

Kranstad V, Sjøftestad S, Fredriksen TV, Willumsen T.

Being considerate every step of the way: a qualitative study analysing trauma-sensitive dental treatment for childhood sexual abuse survivors.

Eur J Oral Sci. 2019 Dec;127(6):539-546. PMID: [31731327](#)
From interviews with 16 survivors of childhood sexual abuse on their dental experiences, their advice was “Being considerate every step of the way.” Dental care was achievable with trauma-informed care in several categories: (i) offering a good start; (ii) being competent; (iii) being aware of the influence of staff behaviour; (iv) building a safe relationship; (v) arranging a secure treatment situation; and (vi) exploring individual triggers.

Prevention

Okasako-Schmucker DL, Cole KH, Finnie RKC, et. al.
Using a Community Preventive Services Task Force Recommendation to Prevent and Reduce Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence.

J Womens Health (Larchmt). 2019 Oct;28(10):1335-1337.

PMID: [31622189](#)

The Community Preventive Services Task Force (CPSTF), an independent panel of experts that develops evidence-based recommendations based on rigorous systematic reviews, recommends interventions that aim to prevent or reduce IPV and SV among youth aged 12-24 years. Decision makers can use these findings to select interventions appropriate for their populations, identify additional areas for research, and justify funding requests.
<http://www.thecommunityguide.org/>

Su Y, D'Arcy C, Meng X.

Social Support and Positive Coping Skills as Mediators Buffering the Impact of Childhood Maltreatment on Psychological Distress and Positive Mental Health in Adulthood: Analysis of a National Population-Based Sample.

Am J Epidemiol. 2020 May 5;189(5):394-402. PMID:

[31907548](#)

From a study of 25,113 Canadian adults, "This research clearly demonstrates that social support and positive coping skills can mediate the negative impact of childhood maltreatment on mental health." There were no observed sex differences.

Grogan-Kaylor A, Galano MM, Howell KH, et. al.

Reductions in Parental Use of Corporal Punishment on Pre-School Children Following Participation in the Moms' Empowerment Program.

J Interpers Violence. 2019 Apr;34(8):1563-1582. PMID:

[27283137](#)

Mothers of preschool children and who were exposed to IPV within the past 2 years showed significantly improved parenting including less use of corporal punishment after a 5 week intervention program helping them understand the effects of IPV on their parenting.

Researchers

Duke NN.

Expanding Concepts of Youth Adversity: Relationships with a Positive Patient Health Questionnaire-2.

J Pediatr Health Care. 2019 Jan;33(1):42-52. PMID: [30146362](#)

Author makes the case for expanded ACEs of bullying and harassment due to various factors, in addition to feeling unsafe in a variety of home and community settings.

Kirkner A, Relyea M, Ullman SE.

Predicting the Effects of Sexual Assault Research Participation: Reactions, Perceived Insight, and Help-Seeking.

J Interpers Violence. 2019 Sep;34(17):3592-3613. PMID:

[27671951](#)

For 1863 women participating in a 3 year study on experiences with sexual assault, 92% had a higher positive than negative reaction to the survey, and 55% sought additional services as a result of participation. Women with child sexual abuse and more self-blame had more negative reactions to the survey, whereas those with more education and individual adaptive coping had more positive reactions. Women who said they gained insight from answering survey questions were most likely to seek additional help.

Other of Interest

Duncan TK, Weaver JL, Zakrisson TL, et. al.

Domestic Violence and Safe Storage of Firearms in the COVID-19 Era.

Ann Surg. 2020 Aug;272(2):e55-e57. PMID: [32675496](#)

"In these uncertain times, it is not surprising to have citizens express feelings of insecurity and loss of control, thus making people concerned for their safety. Several studies have reported that the presence of a firearm in the home increases the risk of homicide and suicide for all in the home." Authors make recommendations for safe gun storage and training; recognition of child abuse, elder abuse, and IPV; and firearm research.

Scott JT, Ingram AM, Nemer SL, Crowley DM.

Evidence-Based Human Trafficking Policy: Opportunities to Invest in Trauma-Informed Strategies.

Am J Community Psychol. 2019 Dec;64(3-4):348-358. PMID:

[31593298](#)

This analysis of legislation proposed in congress regarding human trafficking showed that bills using research language (e.g. impact of trauma, best practices for service delivery, evaluations that guide future policy, etc.) as opposed to simple trauma language were more likely to pass out of Committee and become enacted. (This basic strategy may also apply to proposed legislation in other areas of abuse and trauma.)