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Child Abuse
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Practice Implications

Welcome to the “Practice Implications” section of the Journal, where we hope to highlight research articles included in this issue of interest to the practitioner.

Attributions, affect, and behavior in abuse-risk mothers: a laboratory study. Mark R. Dadds, Miranda J. Mullins, Ross A. McAllister, and Erin Atkinson (pp. 21–45)

Assessment of parents’ attributions of child behavior may be useful in providing help to abusive parents. Attributions can be assessed via the use of videotaped stimuli and need not necessarily be limited to the parent’s own child. Measures of parents’ reactions to positive child behavior may reveal important affective responses that have been largely overlooked in clinical programs that focus on problematic child behavior. Attributional activity may not be important once behavior has become familiar to the parent, and habitual patterns of responding may take precedence. However, novel behavior may elicit reactions in parents that influence the establishment of these more habitual patterns.

To a safer place? Victims of sexual abuse by females and their disclosures to professionals. Myriam S. Denov (pp. 47–61)

This paper highlights three important elements with regard to professional practice. First, professionals should be reminded that sexual abuse by females occurs and are encouraged to respond in the same supportive way as the more common cases of sexual abuse by males. Second, given that victims may be concerned about professional responses because of the gender of the offender, encouraging professionals to inquire about female sexual aggression in the context of their daily practice with victims could facilitate disclosures. Third, the importance of introducing professional training initiatives with a specific focus on female sex offending is highlighted. Training which emphasizes the dangers of unsupportive professional responses and focuses on recovery issues unique to victims of female sex offenders could improve victims’ experiences with professionals.

Improving data systems about juvenile victimization in the United States. David Finkelhor and Melissa Wells (pp. 77–102)

Practitioners sometimes notice that data collected by agencies or other monitoring systems prove to be less than fully useful to their needs because the kinds of information collected are too

limited or the categories insufficiently detailed. These kinds of observations are ones, among others, that have prompted the current critique. It is important for the effective development of any field, and child protection is no exception, that practitioners continue to lobby for data systems that provide information that is useful to them.

Catch-up growth assessment in long-term physically neglected and emotionally abused preschool age male children. Gonzalo Olivan (pp. 103–108)

Admittedly, placement of children into foster residential care in situations of social risk during the first years of life has had unfavorable effects on their physical development. However, in recent years, the foster residential care models in Spain have changed substantially in all the orders decreasing partly the negative effects of institutionalization when compared with previous years. This study shows that in 20 both long-term physically neglected and emotional abuse preschool male children affected by malnutrition and a delay of growth, placement and stay during 1 year in foster residential care was beneficial for their catch-up growth for weight and especially for height.

Cultural norms versus state law in treating incest: a suggested model for Arab families. Khawla Abu Baker and Marwan Dwairy (pp. 109–123)

This article highlights some counterproductive elements when state incest laws are implemented in collective societies, and offers a culturally sensitive model of intervention that avoids threatening the family unity and reputation. Basic in this model is the exploitation of the family power and authority to accomplish what the law intended to accomplish: protect the victim, punish the abuser, and provide psychological support and therapy. The article directs, step by step, professionals who work with incest cases, in how to employ the resources of the family for the welfare and well-being of the victim as well as of the family.