



A Brief History on Child Abuse

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DESCRIPTION

Physical, sexual, and/or psychological maltreatment or neglect of a child or children, particularly by a parent or carer, is referred to as child abuse or child maltreatment. Child abuse is defined as any act or failing to act by a parent or caregiver that causes actual or potential harm to a child and therefore can occur in a child's home or in organizations, schools, or societies with which the child interacts. Although the terms child abuse and child maltreatment are frequently used interchangeably, some scientists distinguish between the two, viewing child maltreatment as an umbrella term that encompasses neglect, exploitation, and trafficking. Different areas have developed their own stance on mandatory reporting, as well as different understanding of what constitutes child abuse for the purpose of removing children from families or prosecuting a criminal charge. Violence to children, committed by employers and teachers, was widespread as late as the nineteenth century, and corporal punishment was prevalent in many areas. Pathologists studying filicide (the killing of children by their parents) reported cases of death from paternal rage, recurrent physical maltreatment, starvation, and sexual abuse in the first half of the nineteenth century. Auguste Ambroise Tardieu, the great French forensic medical expert, gathered a series of 32 such cases in an 1860 paper, of which 18 were fatal, the children dying from starvation and/or recurrent physical violence; it included the case of Adeline Defert, who'd been returned by her grandparents at the age of 8, and brutalized by her parents for 9 years. Every day, she was whipped, hung up by her thumbs and defeated with a nailed plank, burned with hot coals, and her wounds were bathed in nitric acid before being deflorated with a baton. Tardieu paid home visits and observed the effect on the children; he noticed that when they were placed under protection, the sadness and fear on their faces vanished. "Once we consider the poor defenseless beings' tender age, made subject daily and almost hourly to savage atrocities," These

early French findings were lost due to the language barrier, and other countries remained unaware of the cause of many traumatic lesions in infants and toddlers; it would be nearly a century before humanity began to systematically confront Tardieu's "appalling problem." Evidence from pathology and pediatric radiology began to accumulate in the twentieth century, especially in relation to chronic subdural hematoma and limb fractures: subdural hematoma had an unusual bimodal allocation, idiopathic in infants and distressing in adults, while unexplained ossifying periostitis of the long bones resembled that seen following breech extractions. In 1946, the American founder of pediatric radiology, John Caffey, brought attention to the link between long bone fractures and chronic subdural haematoma, and in 1955, it was discovered that infants deleted from the care of aggressive, childish, and emotionally ill parents developed no new lesions. As a result, professional research into the subject resumed in the 1960s. The July 1962 publication of the paper "The Battered Child-Syndrome," authored primarily by pediatric psychiatrist C. Henry Kempe and released in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, marked the beginning of mainstream awareness of child maltreatment. Prior to the publication, injuries to children, including repeated bone fractures, were not commonly recognized as the result of deliberate trauma. Instead, doctors frequently looked for undiagnosed bone diseases or accepted parents' accounts of unintentional mishaps like falls or attacks by neighborhood bullies.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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