



Non-Accidental Head Injury in Young Children: Medical, Legal and Social Responses

Cathy Cobley, Tom Sanders

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'... this book has a much greater value in approaching the particularly difficult field of non-accidental head injuries (NAHI) in children than many sophisticated articles in high-ranked medical journals... This book will affect considerably the approach of the reader to suspected NAHI cases. The book is well worth the couple of hours needed to read it.'

- Forensic Science, Medicine and Pathology

'The book provides a logical and thorough overview of a complex and often emotive subject from a professional and objective stance without any obvious bias... In summary, this excellent book provides an insight into the controversial area of non-accidental head injury in babies and infants and will be of interest to paediatricians, social workers, the legal profession and a small number of paediatric nurses, some of whom may come into contact with these families.'

- British Journal of Neuroscience Nursing

'For readers in a variety of disciplines, Copley (Cardiff Law School, Wales) and Sanders (Medical Sociology, U. of Manchester) explore challenges of responding to head injury in small children that are not due to accident. The research project underlying the study investigated the quantity and quality of evidence recorded when a subdural haemorrhage is detected, and evaluated the use made of such evidence in making decisions that determine the social and legal consequence for the victims and their families. The methodology and raw results of the research are appended.'

- www.booknews.com

This academic research volume explores non-accidental head injury in babies and young children, covering medical, social, and legal aspects of this phenomenon, as well as the responsibilities of professionals, child protection agencies and the media in this area.

Non-accidental head injury is often referred to as being synonymous with 'shaken baby syndrome' (SBS) - a term which has attracted a great deal of controversy in recent years due to both disagreement about its cause and the reliability of eyewitness testimony. The authors investigate the existing evidence surrounding SBS and its recognition and construction, including medical versus social explanations and the difficulties involved in proving abuse. The reliability of eyewitness and expert testimony are discussed in the context of the concept of proof, as is the social backlash against high profile media cases such as those of Sally Clarke, Trupti Patel and Angela Cannings.

The authors argue for an examination of non-accidental head injury rather than SBS, as this term encompasses other forms of abuse as well as shaking, and caution against a blind acceptance of medical testimony, arguing that this may impede child protection agencies' ability to assess cases objectively and accurately. They also consider the effectiveness of prevention strategies in reducing the incidence of child

abuse cases.

This insightful book is essential reading for social workers, lawyers, health professionals, and those working with child protection agencies.

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