

Are the Pediatrician Aware to Make the Diagnosis and Reporting of the Child Abuse?

Nilesh Vilas Deshpande^{1*} and Suruchi Kadoo Deshpande²

¹Specialist Pediatric Dentist, Your Dental and Medical Center L.L.C, Abu Dhabi, UAE

²GP Dentist, Sunny Medical Center, A NMC Company, Sharjah, UAE

***Corresponding Author:** Nilesh Vilas Deshpande, Specialist Pediatric Dentist, Your Dental and Medical Center L.L.C, Abu Dhabi, UAE.

Received: April 22, 2019; **Published:** June 12, 2019

Child Abuse has become an escalating phenomenon that is affecting children from every walk of life and it seems to happen with a more intense brutality. Now, in this progressive world children need our help and support in a more sophisticated way.

Child abuse is a state of emotional, physical, economic and sexual maltreatment affecting a person below the age of eighteen and is a globally prevalent phenomenon. However, we don't have exact data to have a better understanding of the extent, magnitude and trends of the problem. The growing intricacies of life and the changes brought about by socio-economic shifts in India as well as world have played a major cumulative role in increasing the vulnerability of children to various and newer forms of abuse. There are various adverse physical and psycho-social consequences of child abuse and neglect, which adversely affect the health and overall well-being of a child.

Child abuse and neglect comprises of all forms of physical, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment and any kind of exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's well-being. Child abuse and neglect is a violation of the basic human right of a child. Child abuse and human rights violation is one of the most crucial matter on the international human rights agenda in India as well as world. Instruments and standards for child protection and child rights in India are already formatted and revisited regularly. The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 was enacted to provide a stout legal framework for the safeguarding children from various offences of sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography, while maintaining the interest of the child at every level of the judicial procedure. The Constitution of India addresses the vulnerability of children and their right to protection. India is signatory to many international instruments and declarations and International Conventions on Civil and Political Rights pertaining to the rights of children to protection, security and dignity.

The Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of the Indian Constitution provide the framework for child rights. Several laws and national policies have been framed to implement the commitment to child rights. Various government and non-governmental schemes and programs on child protection are already active in India. But the real need of time is to develop and propagate a proper response protocol for detection and reporting Physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect. So that we can fully utilize all available programs and laws to full capacity.

We as medical professionals are expected to perform our duty to help, protect our children by identifying and reporting suspected cases of maltreatment. We must become more aware of our moral, legal, and ethical responsibilities in recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect. We need to understand the seriousness of the problems of child maltreatment and realize that children do not just get hurt in abuse and neglect -- they often die as a direct result of their maltreatment. We must play our part to help stop the pain, suffering, and death that result from child maltreatment; it has been said that victims of child abuse and neglect fall into only two categories -- those who lived through it and those who did not [1-18].

Citation: Nilesh Vilas Deshpande and Suruchi Kadoo Deshpande. "Are the Pediatrician Aware to Make the Diagnosis and Reporting of the Child Abuse?". *EC Paediatrics* 8.7 (2019): 544-545.

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Volume 8 Issue 7 July 2019

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