



Central California Pediatrics

APRIL 2023

Specialty information for physicians who treat children and expectant mothers.



Child Abuse and Prevention: Data, Disparities and Recognizing High-Risk Situations

Dr. Carmela Sosa-Unguez

Valley Children's Complex Primary Care and Guilds Center for Community Health Director

According to the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Child Maltreatment Report, an estimated 3,016,000 children nationally were investigated for abuse in 2021. Of those investigations, 588,229 children were found to be victims of abuse and neglect, equating to a rate of 8.1 victims per 1,000 children. An estimated 1,820 children died from abuse and/or neglect that same year.

We know from data that younger children are more vulnerable and are more likely to be victims, and that girls are more often victims than boys. Children under the age of 1 are victimized more than twice as often as children age 1-2 years, and nearly eight times as often as 17-year-olds. It is estimated that for every incident of abuse or neglect, there are two incidents that have gone unreported.

Additionally, children of color are disproportionately impacted, with higher numbers of allegations as well as substantiated cases. According to the HHS report, three races/ethnicities represent the majority of victims: White (42.8%), Hispanic (24.0%) and Black (21.5%). Despite the fact that 50% of U.S. children are white, while Black, non-Hispanic children make up only 14% of the population.

The data is reflective of the same disproportionality among Central Valley counties. According to kidsdata.org, reports of abuse are disproportionately higher among Black and American Indian/Alaskan Native children. Reports of abuse for Black, non-Hispanic children across California as a whole are 98.8 per 1,000. However, among Valley

counties, rates are as high as 164.6 per 1,000 children.

We cannot talk about abuse without talking about the critical importance of early intervention and prevention as there are long-term sequelae of child abuse and neglect. Children who are abused or neglected are at increased risk for emotional difficulties and cognitive delay. A longitudinal study published in the journal, *Child Abuse and Neglect*, estimated that approximately 80% of young adults who were abused met criteria for at least one psychiatric disorder such as anxiety, depression and suicidality, with significantly impaired function relative to their non-abused counterparts. In addition to the long-term impact on emotional and mental health, the original Kaiser-CDC study on adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) also demonstrated the effect on adult physical health.

It is important to recognize high-risk situations, as well as signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect. Caregiver risk factors include caregiver alcohol or drug abuse, financial problems, housing insecurity, need for public assistance, presence of domestic violence in the home and any caregiver disability including vision/hearing impairment, physical, intellectual, learning and/or emotional disability. The socioeconomic factors place additional stressors on families. Signs of abuse, neglect and maltreatment may include unexplained injuries, excess school absenteeism, being emotionally withdrawn or aggressive, or a caregiver showing little concern for the child. (For a more extensive list of signs and symptoms of child abuse, neglect and emotional maltreatment, visit childwelfare.gov.)



9300 Valley Children's Place
Madera, CA 93636-8762

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE
PAID
FRESNO, CA
PERMIT NO. 114

On the bright side, there are protective factors that can help prevent abuse and neglect. Protective factors are those conditions that increase the well-being of children and their families, and serve as buffers when caregivers are under stress. Some of these protective factors include parental knowledge of child development and parenting skills, positive social connections and concrete support for families to help meet their basic needs.

If you suspect that a child's health or safety is jeopardized by abuse or neglect, contact your county's child protective services immediately. Learn more by visiting cdss.ca.gov/reporting/report-abuse/child-protective-services/report-child-abuse.

For more information on child abuse prevention, treatment or specialized training, visit valleychildrens.org/abuseprevention or ACESaware.org.



Valley Children's is a proud partner of ACEs Aware who is leading a first-in-the-nation effort to screen patients for adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) to help improve and save lives. Find out how to become an ACEs certified provider at acesaware.org.

Upcoming CME Opportunities

Physician Wellness Series Authentic Connections: Fostering Resilience and Well-Being

Presented by Alex Koenig, PhD &
Janae Peters, LMSW

Tuesday, May 9, 2023

12:15 p.m. - 1 p.m. | Activity Code: 35721

Religious Beliefs & Practices Jehovah's Witnesses: Religious and Ethical Perspective on Medical Therapy

Presented by Steve Cade, Dir. Business
Relations

Thursday, May 11, 2023

12:15 p.m. - 1 p.m. | Activity Code 36117

Grand Rounds Hemophagocytic Lymphohistiocytosis

Presented by Ashish Kumar, MD, PhD, Dir.
Histiocytosis Center, Cincinnati Children's

Wednesday, May 24, 2023

12:15 p.m. - 1:15 p.m. | Activity Code: 36175

Health Equity Grand Rounds Using Critical Race Theory to Dismantle Race-Based Medicine in Pediatric Clinical Guidelines

Presented by Courtney Gilliam, MD

Thursday, May 25, 2023

12:15 p.m. - 1 p.m. | Activity Code: 35638

Pediatric Clinical Symposium Virtual Education

Presented by James Pierce, MD

Wednesday, May 31, 2023

12:15 p.m. - 1:15 p.m. | Activity Code: 35616

Register for Valley Children's CME events through
our CME Tracker, cmetracker.net/VCH