

FORENSIC & TOXICOLOGY SUMMARY

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Child and domestic abuse

Child abuse

There are 4 major subtypes of child abuse:

1. Physical abuse.
 2. Psychological & emotional abuse.
 3. Sexual abuse.
 4. Neglect.
- The majority of deaths are caused by either hitting or beating with the hand, shaking, throwing, dropping and -less often- by burning or suffocation.
 - The most common mode of death is **head injury** then rupture of an abdominal viscus.
 - Child abuse syndrome (or battered baby syndrome): a neonate or child suffers from a repetitive physical injuries from the parents or another caregiver in circumstances that exclude accident.
 - Most of the fatal victims are young and about the 2/3 of them are below 3 years of age.

How to know if there is a child abuse?

1. History: disexplanation, delay in seeking treatment, changing the history overtime (discrepancy).
2. Physical examination:
 - ✓ Soft tissue: multiple injuries with different site & age, **bruises** (especially in the cheeks, upper limb and buttocks).
 - Multiple bruises with different color and sites indicate multiple episodes of physical abuse.
 - ✓ Oral injuries: lip contusion & abrasion, frenulum tearing.
 - ✓ Eye injuries: black eye, retinal hemorrhage.
 - ✓ Head injuries: the shaken baby syndrome triad (brain swelling, retinal hemorrhage, subdural hematoma).
 - ✓ Skeletal injuries: bucket handle fractures, rib fractures, spiral fractures.
 - ✓ Thermal injuries: scalded burn (emersion, splashing, tap water), dry burn (contact, cigarette).

Child abuse outcomes:

- Failure to thrive.
- Psychomotor skills.
- Learning difficulties.
- Death :(

Notes:

- Neonaticide: killing of a newborn (within the first 24 hours of life) by the mother.
- Infanticide: killing of an infant (under 1 year of age) by the mother.
- Filicide: killing of a child above 1 year of age (by a parents or caregiver).

Domestic Abuse

An incident or pattern of abusive behavior directed by one family or household member against another.

Types of Domestic Abuse:

- **Physical abuse**
 - ✓ Indicators: Bruises, broken bones, head injuries.
 - ✓ Physical abuse also includes forcing drug/alcohol use.
- **Emotional and psychological abuse**
 - ✓ Indicators: Anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, PTSD, difficulty sleeping, social isolation, substance abuse, lack of appetite.
 - ✓ Stalking refers to a repeated, unwanted attention and harassment directed at a person, causing them to feel fear, distress, or concern for their safety. It can involve physical following, surveillance, communication, or threats.
 - ✓ Cyberstalking refers to online action or repeated emailing that lead to emotional distress in the recipient.
- **Sexual abuse**
 - ✓ Indicators: Physical signs of trauma, STDs, pregnancy, psychological distress.
- **Financial abuse**
 - ✓ Indicators: Unexplained lack of financial autonomy, dependence on abuser.
- **Neglect**
 - ✓ Indicators: Malnutrition, untreated medical conditions, poor living conditions.

Cycle of Abuse

