
FOREWORD

The existence of “shaken baby syndrome” (the triad of signs consisting of unexplained encephalopathy, subdural hemorrhages, and retinal hemorrhages) has been widely debated. Sometimes it is difficult to tell if a child’s head has been shaken, impacted, or crushed; whether the blood supply to the brain was purposefully occluded; or if another event may have caused a healthy, happy child to become suddenly ill with serious head trauma. The editors of this book have recognized this difficulty and adopted the term “abusive head trauma” (AHT) instead. This term conveys the understanding that the previously healthy child suffered an inflicted injury, but the mechanism of injury—of which shaking is merely one—is not presumed.

Abusive Head Trauma Quick Reference breaks new ground in many ways. First, it is comprehensive in its approach. Every aspect of AHT is covered, from neuroscience to prosecution. This text is truly multidisciplinary, involving health professionals, law enforcement officers, legal prosecutors, social welfare experts, mental health professionals, and rehabilitation specialists.

Another exciting aspect of this book is that a new generation of experts is writing exciting chapters. The list of authors demonstrates that the field is expanding and vigorous. Many new people have acquired expertise in diagnosing and treating abusive head trauma. It is refreshing to see a child abuse text that highlights the work of new experts. Although the ancestry of this book can be traced to the work of John Caffey, C. Henry Kempe, Ray E. Helfer, Norman Guthkelch, and other legends in the field, it is clear that the field is in competent hands with the current generation.

The subject of AHT is approached with a critical eye on literature and extensive clinical experience, providing the readers with balanced sources of data. Finally, the case-based approach makes this text an excellent resource for teachers of medicine and related disciplines as well as for “life-long learners” who want to sharpen their diagnostic acumen and medical skills.

The field of child abuse medicine has come a long way in a short time. This book is yet another landmark on our road to understanding the infant brain and its unique vulnerabilities. I thank the editors and authors for documenting our progress thus far.

Carole Jenny, MD, MBA

Professor of Pediatrics
Brown Medical School
Director, ChildSafe Child Protection Program
Hasbro Children's Hospital
Providence, Rhode Island

FOREWORD

Today's courtrooms have become the battleground for lawyers and experts who challenge the core science of medical research and theory on abusive head trauma (AHT). It is a battle fought before jurors and judges who have little knowledge of the scientific and medical issues that they are supposed to determine. Amidst this chaotic battle sits the judicial system and its search for truth and justice; however, the end result in many instances is confusion, deception, and a loss of integrity in both the science and the law—a sad and tragic epilogue in the wake of the even more significant loss or destruction of a small and precious human life.

For those involved in responding to child maltreatment, these stories occur far too frequently. Few professionals exposed to these scenarios question the reality that children are the daily victims of violent acts perpetrated by those who are supposed to love and protect them the most. For professionals, it is not a question of understanding and believing that these situations exist, but instead of getting others to understand these same truths and to explain why these truths should be accepted. This is no easy task.

The last two decades have witnessed an unprecedented growth in the state of medical research and knowledge regarding AHT. This increased knowledge base has brought with it improvements in the recognition and diagnosis of such trauma by medical professionals, concomitant increases in referrals of these findings to other investigating and prosecuting agencies, and more frequent legal filings through both the juvenile and criminal courts. If there is one thing we have learned from the trials, tribulations, and controversies of the past, it is that a multidisciplinary, coordinated response to these cases is the most effective method for coordinating information, promoting knowledge, improving professional practice, and arriving at the truth. The multidisciplinary nature of *Abusive Head Trauma Quick Reference* reflects the importance of this principle and the value of this approach.

The educational value of this text is to be found not only in alerting professionals to the current issues and controversies that we all face, but also as a compilation of current professional thought against which novel and controversial theories can be tested and judged. Readers will be encouraged to elevate their own practice to the standards outlined by these experts, and perhaps as importantly, they will be motivated to seek additional knowledge from professionals both within and without their fields of practice. All should be challenged to develop best practices for themselves and their communities. No lesser standards can hope to withstand the rigors of the current and future challenges that are meted out in the crucible of the courtroom.

Brian Holmgren

Assistant District Attorney General
Davidson County District Attorney Generals Office
Nashville, Tennessee

FOREWORD

From 2000 to 2004, I was charged with the responsibility of advising police officers in the United Kingdom on how to investigate cases of child abuse. In doing so, I gained unique insight into how the many professionals involved in investigating and treating these cases actually carry out their work. I have been lucky to work with truly committed doctors, nurses, forensic pathologists, lawyers, and social service workers in countries such as Sweden, the United States, Canada, Bermuda, Germany, Estonia, and the United Kingdom. It has been my privilege to work with and learn from many of the professionals who have given their time to this book.

Every year, in countries all over the world, children are injured or killed as a result of abusive head trauma. During the last few years, the nomenclature for describing these injuries has changed from Caffey's "whiplash shaken infant syndrome" of the 1970s to the "shaken baby syndrome" of the 1990s. The title of this reference work, *Abusive Head Trauma*, more accurately reflects the true nature of how these children are injured and killed.

When I researched abusive head trauma (AHT) on behalf of the Home Office from 2000 to 2003, I was surprised to find a lack of reference works on this extremely important issue. That gap is now being addressed, and these new publications are written for both professionals and the public. This book is the first illustrated clinical and photographic quick reference on AHT, and it will be invaluable to all disciplines involved in child abuse cases. Only by working in a truly multidisciplinary environment can we hope to understand these cases and build strategies to treat, investigate, and prevent them.

This book does exactly that by addressing medical, legal, nursing, social service, and investigative issues of AHT. What it cannot do is show the grief and despair encountered by parents who have lost a child to AHT or soothe a young victim. The professionals who have contributed to this book have encountered that grief and despair many times, and it is one of the driving factors as to why they have given

their time and energy to helping educate colleagues and public alike.

The dedication shown by all professionals working in this arena is clear. Thank you for your efforts, on behalf of injured and abused children everywhere, in bringing this book to fruition.

Philip L. Wheeler

Detective Chief Inspector
Central Operations
New Scotland Yard
London, England

PREFACE

In the last decade, as more communities have worked to develop effective methods for recognizing and treating victims, investigating cases, protecting victims from further harm, prosecuting offenders, and pursuing education and prevention efforts, there has been a growing interest in educating and training the professionals involved in all phases of the community's response to this problem. It is time to share information in an organized, comprehensive, and useful manner among professionals working in the field in order to provide improved recognition, treatment, investigation, prosecution, education, and prevention of this deadly form of abuse.

This text, which is an abbreviated version of the primary reference *Abusive Head Trauma in Infants and Children*, is designed to serve as an easy-to-use field reference for medical, investigative, legal, social service, and prevention professionals. All of these disciplines are affected by abusive head trauma (AHT) in children and all have made notable progress in handling the results of child maltreatment in general. The goal of educating all professionals is to help children and families with the corollary of improving society's concern and care for the most helpless of its citizens.

The chapters offered here attempt to put the problem in perspective with respect to current attitudes and practices. In addition, notable differences between accidental brain injury and AHT are discussed in terms of the mechanisms of injury and the other signs to observe. Special considerations for the areas of nursing, radiology, neuro-radiology, neurosurgery, and ophthalmology are addressed in specific chapters. Disorders that mimic AHT and fall into the differential diagnosis are carefully explained. As with other types of child maltreatment, the occurrence of associated injuries can help in making an accurate diagnosis, so the specific findings that distinguish AHT from other causes of injury are discussed in detail.

Specialists serving in social service, forensic, and prosecutorial roles will find chapters covering the contributions they make to resolving cases

of AHT. The latest courtroom aids are explained to help present an accurate and visually compelling case. The roles of individuals who come into contact with children suffering from AHT are detailed to provide the background needed to deal with cases expeditiously. Each chapter emphasizes caring for the child and family as well as identifying the problem and the perpetrator.

We have sought to offer a balanced approach to the problem of AHT while exploring current efforts and recommendations to address the concerns of professionals. It is hoped that this publication will become a reliable field reference for professionals in the medical, investigative, legal, social service, and prevention areas.

Lori Frasier, MD, FAAP

Kay Rauth-Farley, MD, FAAP

Randell Alexander, MD, PhD, FAAP

Robert N. Parrish, JD