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## FOREWORD

In countries where child maltreatment is manifestly illegal and where sanctions exist against the abuser, the challenge of recognition is one of detection and identification. Instances of maltreatment can be hidden or caregivers may claim that injuries are caused by accidental events or organic illness. The veracity of children who disclose abuse and the expertise of professionals who testify to the features of maltreatment may be called into question. The lack of rigorous experimental studies may be cited as evidence of the unreliability of child witnesses or the ingenuousness of forensic professionals. When lies, misunderstandings, or lack of sufficient knowledge or evidence prevents a clear distinction between abuse and a more benign explanation, it is the task of the responsible professional to make this distinction clear. However, when signs of maltreatment exist or indicate that maltreatment is at least a strong possibility, professionals must make that case and advocate for measures to ensure the child's safety. To increase the likelihood of reaching accurate conclusions, the professional must have a clear understanding of the harm attributable to maltreatment, the mechanisms that cause injury, and the signs that identify the lesions produced.

Use of this quick reference will contribute to the accurate identification of abuse and, in so doing, the wider recognition of maltreatment as a violation of children's rights, safety, and well-being. One of the benefits of globalization is that this knowledge and attitude may be disseminated so that the world can become a safer place for children everywhere.

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Safeguarding the health and well being of all children has been an increasing focus of modern society. We have come far from the days when parents considered their children “property.” Along the way we have instituted many measures to improve the health of children: immunizations, car seats, lead detection and abatement, the “Back to Sleep” campaign, and the “Reach Out and Read” campaign, to name a few.

The battle against child abuse and neglect has also made significant strides, although the war is far from over. The challenges that face those who seek to protect children from maltreatment include moving forward, preventing abuse before it starts, and reducing the rate of recidivism in those who have been abused. Professional education and early identification are critical to secondary prevention. Appropriate judicial decisions are also essential to ensure that children are not returned to parents who lack the necessary skills to care for their offspring. Interventional programs must be created to make reunification a safe and satisfactory experience for children and their parents. Primary prevention is perhaps even more complicated. Although epidemiological studies have identified high-risk factors for abuse, providing anticipatory interventional services is costly and only partially validated. The societal issues of poverty, violence, and substance abuse are clearly contributing factors.

As professionals committed to helping children reach their potential, we must take steps to ensure that all children are cared for in a safe, nurturing environment. Up-to-date, evidence-based literature plays a vital role in the educational process. *Child Abuse Quick Reference, 2nd Edition*, with its wealth of information compiled by multiple child care professionals who work individually and collectively to prevent, identify, evaluate, and treat children and families facing the many challenges associated with a high risk of child maltreatment, is part of this process. The more we learn, the stronger our ability is to effectively keep children safe. Our resolve to work tirelessly to reduce and

eventually remove the threat posed to the well-being of all children by child maltreatment remains strong. With education, sound information like that contained in this textbook, research, and advocacy, we can work individually and collectively to influence the future of the most vulnerable members of our society.

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## PREFACE

Child maltreatment in its various forms remains a significant problem confronting children and their families worldwide. The incidence and prevalence statistics surrounding child maltreatment continue to be staggering when compared to the reduction in pediatric morbidity and mortality associated with infectious diseases over the past 100 years. This reference is put forth to help healthcare professionals, social service providers, and law enforcement personnel meet the challenges that arise in dealing with this preventable problem. We have emphasized the multidisciplinary team approach to caring for children who are maltreated. Specialists in each area offer insights regarding approaches to identifying and managing specific forms of child maltreatment, including procedures for evaluation and practical guidelines for handling cases.

It is hoped that this quick reference will help the professional who deals with any area of child maltreatment to be more fully equipped to assess situations appropriately and determine the best course of action. Information is a vital ally in recognizing the signs of maltreatment. A thorough clinical examination, interviews with the child and family, and, depending on the situation, properly conducted site investigations, are critical. Ultimately, all professionals have the shared goal of preventing child maltreatment. By more accurately identifying child maltreatment, both the victim and other children may be spared from further harm. Because time is sometimes of the essence in cases of maltreatment, this quick reference provides a portable means to access important information. The focus of all our work is the health and well-being of children and their families, and we offer this reference as a powerful tool for creating a better future for them.

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