

International conference on Adolescent Medicine & Child Psychology

September 28-30, 2015 Houston, USA



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Diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a shared diagnosis between parent and child

The diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a key point in many civil litigation cases regarding minors and establishing causality between perceived trauma and psychological sequelae can be difficult. Complicating this further is the effect of the perceived trauma on the minor's parents and their psychological reaction. A parent with post-traumatic stress-like symptoms (PTSS) can be just as influential to a child developing symptoms to a trauma as the initial trauma itself. In such cases, can minors ultimately be diagnosed with PTSD if they eventually exhibit all of the diagnostic criteria? We will present two such clinical cases in which the child ("victim") of the trauma initially endorsed no PTSD symptoms and only presented with these symptoms months-to-years later. We explore this conundrum and discuss the forensic implications and the potential effects of the updated diagnostic criteria of PTSD in DSM-V.

Biography

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