

Ophthalmologists' attitudes, knowledge, and willingness to report child abuse

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The aim of the present study was to explore ophthalmologists' attitudes, knowledge, and willingness to report child abuse. One-hundred-and-seven ophthalmologists employed in various hospitals in Israel completed an online questionnaire. Less than half the ophthalmologists (44.9%) reported that they had treated children whom they identified or suspected as being victims of child abuse, while only 43.9% of these reported child abuse. Despite generally positive attitudes towards identification and reporting of child abuse among the ophthalmologists, their average level of knowledge was low. Ophthalmologists who had received training on child abuse and residents displayed a higher level of knowledge. In addition, female ophthalmologists tended to agree more that ophthalmologists are obligated to screen for and report child abuse. Moreover, female ophthalmologists expressed higher willingness to report child abuse. The present study reveals that underreporting of child abuse, and more precisely the discrepancy between identification and reporting, is present among ophthalmologists. It seems that lack of knowledge regarding identification and reporting of child abuse is the main barrier to reporting, especially among medical specialists. These findings underscore the importance of training programs on child abuse, both during formal education in medical school, and post-qualification, for all ophthalmologists, irrespective of seniority.

Keywords: Ophthalmologists, Child Abuse, Attitude, Knowledge, Reporting

Biography

Dina Mostovoy is the head of the Pediatric Ophthalmic Institute of our medical center, examined and treated the patient, and reviewed the manuscript.

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