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Title: Findings in older children with abusive head injury : does shaken-child syndrome exist?

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Abstract: Shaken-baby syndrome (SBS) has been hypothesized to occur after shaking by an adult during the first 2 years of life. We wondered whether it is possible to achieve rotational forces sufficient to cause SBS-like injuries in children >2 years of age. The present study describes cases of child abuse in older children who presented with the classic ophthalmologic and intracranial findings of SBS. In this case series, 4 cases of older children (2.5-7 years old; 11.8-22 kg) who died from abusive head injuries and who had diffuse retinal hemorrhages identified antemortem were selected for review. The cases were abstracted from hospital charts, records from autopsies, coroners' and district attorneys' offices, and court transcripts. In all 4 cases the history provided by the primary caregiver did not match the severity of the injuries. Three case subjects presented with patterned bruises. Multilayered retinal hemorrhages and acute subdural hematoma were observed in all 4 cases. At autopsy, diffuse axonal injury was evident in 3 of the 4 cases; all 4 cases had optic nerve sheath hemorrhages. None of the victims had skeletal fractures on radiologic examination or at autopsy. This case series demonstrates that it is possible to observe SBS-like retinal and central nervous system findings in the older and heavier child. Our findings underscore the need for providers to consider intentional shaking as a mechanism of injury in the evaluation of abusive head injury in older children. (Author abstract)