

Booklet issued on child abuse

TORONTO - The Ontario Medical Association has published a series of guidelines aimed at supporting physicians in recognizing and assessing the sexually-abused child. The guidelines are contained in a booklet entitled "Recognition and Assessment of the Sexually-Abused Child," which provides background on child abuse, details on the physical exam, documentation procedures, approaches to therapy, and a description of the physician's role as it relates to other health-care disciplines.

"The booklet is designed to enhance physicians' understanding of the nature of childhood sexual abuse," said author Dr. Ken Finkel, who is a member of the OMA's Committee on Child Welfare, professor emeritus in the department of paediatrics at Hamilton's McMaster University Faculty of Health Sciences, and director of the Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) Program at Chedoke-McMaster Hospitals in Hamilton.

"Unfortunately, child abuse is far from a rare event, and chances are likely that a practicing physician will at some time be asked to assess a child who may be a sexual-abuse victim," explained Dr. Finkel.

Since the first printing of the OMA booklet in 1983, a great deal of progress has been made in developing clinical, sociological and judicial approaches to the sexual abuse of children. "Revisions to these guidelines reflect an expanded understanding of the long-term consequences of being an abuse victim, the nature of children's accounts of their victimization, and of the subtle physical signs of abuse," said Dr. Finkel.

The updated guidelines, which are being distributed to general practitioners, pediatricians, hospital-based child-abuse teams, children's aid societies and faculties of medicine, help support the Child Welfare Committee's continuing program to promote the health and well-being of infants and children.

Centennial Manor coffee hour

Ladies, you are invited to a neighbourhood coffee hour this coming Wednesday from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. to be held in the main auditorium of Halton Centennial Manor, 125 Ontario St., Milton.

The special feature is "Window Treatments" by Sue Masulaka. There will also be a musical interlude of selections and a guest speaker, Yvonne McCallum. The event is hosted by the Milton Christian Ladies Coffee Hour. Free babysitting and admission.


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