

**The Dental Practitioner's role in Child abuse and neglect**

Anne Rønneberg,  
Clinical director, senior lecturer, specialist in paediatric dentistry  
Faculty of Dentistry, University of Oslo, Norway




**Clinic for Child Oral Health Care**

anne.ronneberg@odont.uio.no

The usual term: "Watch your Teeth!"



**PASS PÅ TENNENE**


**HVORFOR?** Du kan unngå tannrøte . . . .

**HVORDAN?** Du blir frisk og pen  
Spis sikringskost

Puss tennene straks etter at du har spist  
i overkjeven ovenfra og nedover



**SLIK** i underkjeven nedenfra og oppover

A poster from a Waiting Room



When any of us hear something about a child that concerns us, we should report our concerns to someone who can help.


- As Dental Professionals we are legally committed to report to the local Social Service when we are concerned for a child or teenager/youth

**United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**

This is an international human rights treaty that applies to all children and young people under the age of 18 years. It has implications for both child protection practice and provision of dental care.

- Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989
- Ratified by Norway in 1991



**The Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 19**

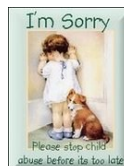
- States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

## Faculty of Dentistry

- The dental team needs to be alert to indicators of possible abuse or neglect and to be prepared to act on any concerns
- We need procedures for multiagency working to protect children
- All agencies and professionals should work together to promote children's welfare and protect them from abuse and neglect.

**In Norway the municipal Healthservice and Healthcare system have been reduced.**

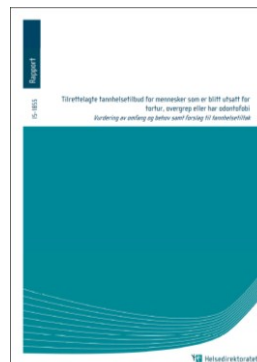
**The Dental team, therefore, play and important role. We see all the children and youths regularly in our dental practice from 3-18 years.**



## Faculty of Dentistry

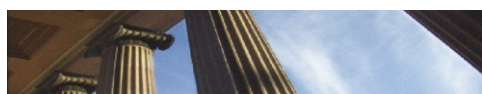


## Faculty of Dentistry



A report from the Norwegian Health Board about Dental care for people who have been exposed to torture, abuse and suffering from odontophobia.

2010



# Literature? Evidence-Based?

PROFESSIONAL ISSUE

## Detecting Child Abuse and Neglect — Are Dentists Doing Enough?

• Andrew Tsang, DMD •  
• David Sweet, DMD, PhD •

### Abstract

*Dental health professionals continue to under-report child abuse, despite growing awareness of their potential role in detecting this crime. This article presents an overview of child abuse and neglect and outlines the indicators that may alert dental professionals to possible maltreatment of child patients. Documentation protocols are also provided to aid in reporting child abuse identified in the dental office.*

MeSH Key Words: child abuse; dentists; social responsibility

© J Can Dent Assoc 1999; 65:367-91  
This article has been peer reviewed.

**PEDIATRICS**  
Advanced Search

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS

Home My Pediatrics Journal Information Current Issue Past Issues Subscriptions & Services Contact Us

PEDIATRICS Vol. 116 No. 6 December 2005, pp. 1565-1568 (doi:10.1542/peds.2005-2315)

**CLINICAL REPORT**

**Oral and Dental Aspects of Child Abuse and Neglect**

Nancy Kellogg, MD and the Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect

**This Article**

- Abstract **FREE**
- Full Text (PDF)
- p<sup>3</sup>Rs: Submit a response
- Alert me when this article is cited
- Alert me when p<sup>3</sup>Rs are posted
- Alert me if a correction is posted
- Citation Map

**Services**

- E-mail this article to a friend
- Similar articles in this journal
- Similar articles in PubMed
- Alert me to new issues of the journal

Child Abuse Review Vol. 13: 65-72 (2004)  
Published online in Wiley InterScience (www.interscience.wiley.com). DOI: 10.1002/car.833

**An Overview and Pilot Study of the Dental Practitioner's Role in Child Protection**

**Short Report**

**Alison Cairns\***  
Glasgow Dental Hospital and School  
Glasgow, UK

**Michael Murphy**  
Child Protection Consultant

Child abuse and the protection of children is currently a high-profile social problem. The murders of children have raised the profile of child protection with politicians and the

**Chronic conditions in children increase the risk for physical abuse**

17% of the children suffering from chronic conditions  
9% of the healthy children

Have been exposed to physical abuse

**Chronic conditions in children increase the risk for physical abuse – but vary with socio-economic circumstances**

Birgitta Svensson (birgitta.svensson@kau.se), Carl-Gustaf Bornehag, Staffan Janson  
Division of Public Health Sciences, Department of Health and Environment, Karlstad University, Karlstad, Sweden. *Mars 2011, Acta Paediatrica 2011 100, pp. 407-412*

child protection and the dental team

Introduction - why you need to know Abuse and Neglect - what you need to know Child Protection - responding Safeguarding children in dental practice

About >  
Contact >  
Site map >  
Terms and conditions >  
Return to homepage >  
Glossary >  
References >  
Finding your local contacts >  
Further information >  
Further training >  
Downloads >

You can use this site when? How?

You can use this site when?	How?
A training resource	If you need to update your knowledge of child protection
A fast response text	If you have concerns NOW about a child
A clinical governance resource	If you need to prepare your dental practice to safeguard children

Additional materials, including the accompanying handbook and sample documents to print or download are available from the left hand menu at any time. If you have a bound copy of the 'Child Protection and the Dental Team: an introduction to safeguarding children in dental practice' handbook, you can store the documents inside the cover pocket together with relevant local information you obtain.

**Stud.odont. Anette Kristiansen, Marianne Urke og Torhild Glende Hernæs**

• "Child abuse and neglect – Dental Practitioners Role"

Veiledere: Førsteamanuensis Sigrd Kvaal, UiO  
Universitetslektor Anne Ranneberg, UiO



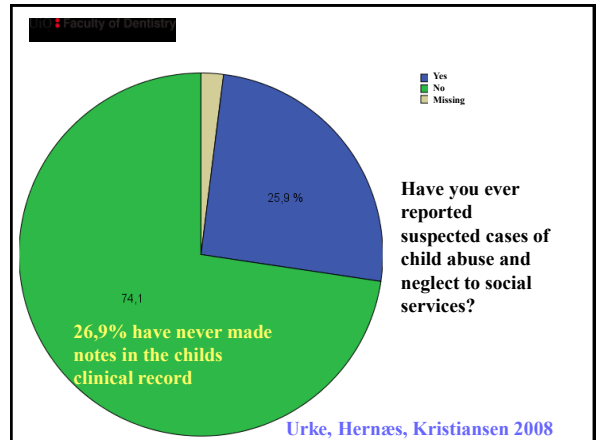
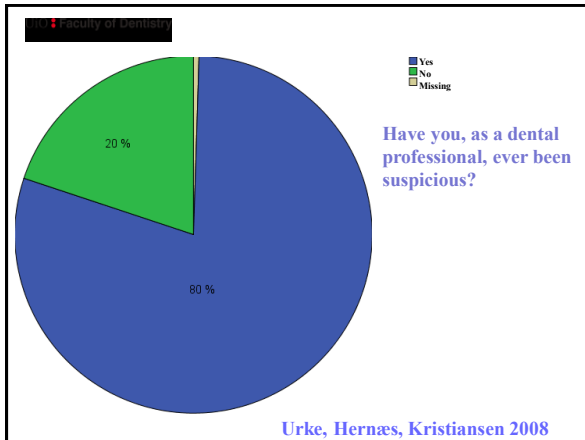
**95,9% of the dentists in this survey, wanted to learn more about this topic**

84,1%

13,8%

**Do dental professionals have enough training to recognize and respond to signs of abuse and neglect in their patients?**

Urke, Hernæs, Kristiansen 2008



- Faculty of Dentistry
- ### Who do the dentists want to consult?
- 33,3% nurse
  - 21,9% child welfare
  - 20,9% both nurse and child welfare
  - 23,9% others, like colleagues, doctors, parents etc.

Faculty of Dentistry

### Survey from Denmark:

Uldum B, Christensen HN, Welbury R, Poulsen S.

### Danish dentists' and dental hygienists' knowledge of and experience with suspicion of child abuse or neglect.

International Journal of Paediatric Dentistry  
Volume 20, Issue 5, pages 313–321, September 2010

Faculty of Dentistry

### Results from Denmark:

Suspicion of child abuse 1/2

Ever suspected child abuse or neglect	38 %
Suspicion within the last 6 months	14 %
Certain within the 6 months	7 %
Ever referred to the Social Services	14 %
Ever had suspicion but not referred	30 %
- made notes in the child's clinical record	37 %

- Faculty of Dentistry
- ### What's so special at the dental office?
- Individuals who commit abuse often avoid taking their victims to the same physician, but usually return to the same dental office
  - Dentists and dental hygienists are in a unique position to recognize signs of physical and sexual abuse that occur around the head and neck area
  - The patient is laying back and we have a unique position to do carefully clinical examination

## Indicators of child abuse and neglect

- Bruises and bite marks
- Different skeletal injuries/fractures and skull trauma
- Head injuries
  - Absence of hair and/or hemorrhaging beneath the scalp due to hair pulling
  - Loosened, fractured or missing teeth
  - Jaw and nasal fractures
  - Intraoral signs of sexual abuse, for example petechia in the palate
- Lacerations of the
  - Lip, eye and face
  - maxillary labial fermium
- Burns
  - Cigarette burns
  - Immersion burns indicating dunking in a hot liquid ("sock" or "glove" burns on the hands or feet)
  - Other signs of burns



## Physical abuse – manifested in the orofacial region.

Becker et al USA JADA 1978; 97:24-28	65%
da Fonseca et al USA Paed Dent 1992; 14:152-57	76%
Jessee USA ASDC 1995; 62:245-9	66%
Caims et al UK Int J Paed Dent 2005; 15:311-319	59%

## Physical Abuse - Becker et al

260 cases had a total of 386 injuries

- 33% head
- 61% face
- 6% intraoral



## What makes us concerned?

- A history who doesn't match our findings



Eye injuries



Cigarette burn



Prof. Richard Welbury, Glasgow, UK



■ Unexplained petechies in the palate.

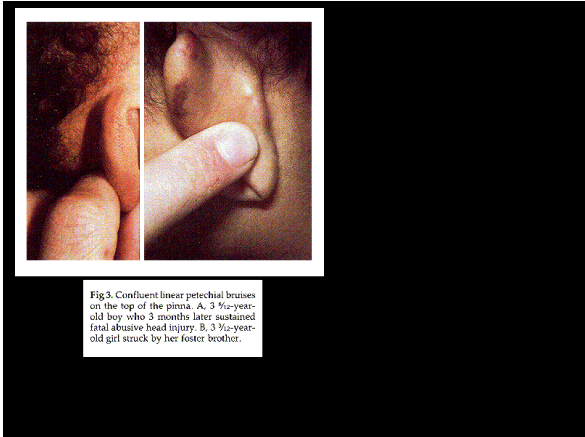
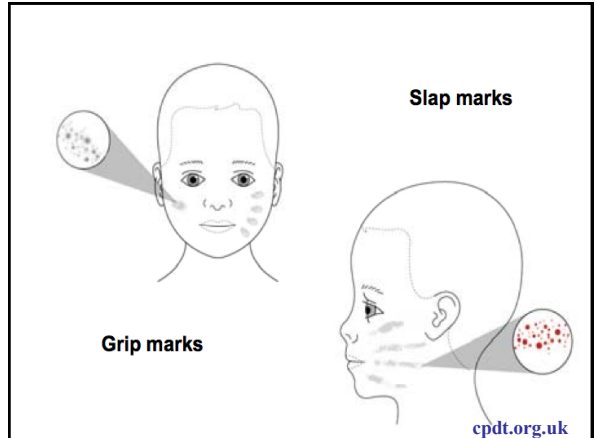
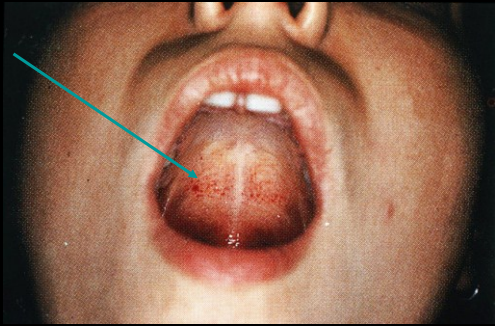


Fig 3. Confluent linear petechial bruises on the top of the pinna. A, 3 1/2-year-old boy who 3 months later sustained fatal abusive head injury. B, 3 1/2-year-old girl struck by her foster brother.

UO Faculty of Dentistry

### Bruises:

- Localization: face, neck? ?
- Pattern? From belt, hand? etc
- Explanation???
- *Ask yourself; does det explanation match the history*

UO Faculty of Dentistry

### Record of Facial Injury

**Clinical record of Facial injuries**

cpdt.org.uk

### Typical sites to be injured:

**REMEMBER**  
Concerns are raised by:

- injuries to both sides of the body
- injuries to soft tissue
- injuries with particular patterns
- any injury that doesn't fit the explanation
- delays in presentation
- untreated injuries

ISBN 0-9552257-0-1, 978-0-9552257-0-3


www.cpd.org.uk

washingtonpost.com

**For Want of a Dental**  
 The danger of untreated tooth decay from tooth decay to brain  
 Wednesday, February 20, 2008 Page 01

**caries – abscess – bacteremia – meningitis**

**Died 12 years old**



Deamonte Driver, sitting next to his mother, Alyce, shows the scars from incisions for his brain surgery.



**Untreated caries gives:**


- Pain
- Infections
- Problems with chewing

-and it might be a reason for concern!

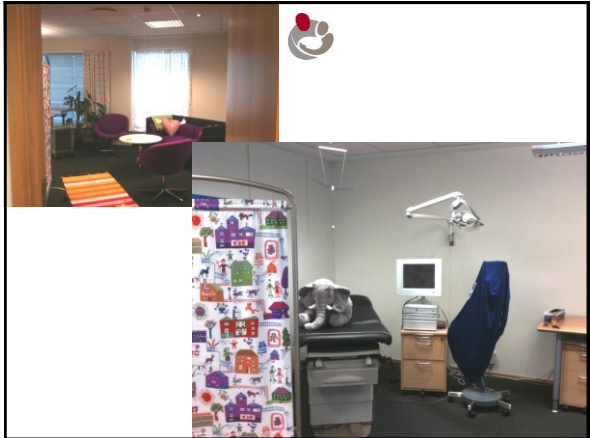
**Take clinical fotos!**




**"Childrens House" form Iceland "Barnahus"**



Child dental treatment	Judge interrogation	Therapy and helping the Child back to "normal"
Counseling to the child and parents	Bringing competence to they who works with children	Networking interdisciplinary





Reidun S.

Tannhelsetjenestens rolle ved omsorgssvikt og overgrep mot barn:

# Hvorfor spør vi ikke?

## Nordisk konferanse

7.-8. mai 2009  
Holmenkollen Park Hotell, Oslo  
Endelig program.  
Mer informasjon og påmelding finner du på [www.nfpedodonti.no](http://www.nfpedodonti.no) eller [www.tako.no](http://www.tako.no)



### Uttalelse fra de nordiske barneombudene

Den nordiske konferansen i Oslo 6.-8. mai 2009 om tannhelsetjenestens rolle for å oppdage omsorgssvikt og overgrep mot barn.

De nordiske barneombudene anerkjenner at tannhelsetjenesten har en unik mulighet for å få nærkontakt med alle barn. De får god oversikt over skader i tann-, muskel- og halsregionen, ser barnes oppførsel og egenskaper utelukkende fra tannlegekontoret. De fleste fysiske overgrep mot barn foregår mot øverste del av kroppen. Tannhelsetjenesten kan i noe om utvalgte forhold ved omsorgen i hjemmet, Mønstre i samfunnet hos barn skal tolkes som utrykk for alvorlig forurettelse inntil det motsatte er bevist.

Det må etableres rutiner for å følge opp barn som ikke møter til tannlegekontoret. Manglende fremmøte kan også være en indikasjon på mangelfull foreldrekompetanse.

Tannhelsetjenesten har et stort og utnyttet potensial for å forebygge og avdekke omsorgssvikt og overgrep mot barn. Tannhelsetjenesten har en solid kunnskap om barn, men vår nordiske erfaring viser at allfor få berører seg av det.

Barneombudene i Norden oppfordrer beslutningstakere i Danmark, Finland, Norge, Sverige og på Island til å undersøke tannhelsetjenestens muligheter i alle nasjonale planer som omhandler beskyttelse av overgrep mot barn. Nasjonale myndigheter bør se til at tannhelsetjenestens muligheter utnyttes. Faglig fokus på dette området må være obligatorisk i utdanning og videreutdanning av tannhelsetjenestepersonell. Kompetansen må oppbygges inn i all faglig utdanning. Faglig spisskompetanse må utvikles, vedlikeholdes og gjøres tilgjengelig.

Øvre profesjoner som arbeider med barn må gi systematisk informasjon om tannhelsetjenestens viktige rolle i forhold til beskyttelse av barn.

Barneombudene i Norden ber med dette våre respektive myndigheter om å sikre at tannhelsetjenestens viktige rolle anerkennes i all nasjonal arbeid for å forebygge og avdekke omsorgssvikt og overgrep mot barn. Vi ber om å bli orientert om planer for å styrke fagfeltet.

Oslo 7. mai 2009  
Maria-Kaisu Aho, Finland - Charlotte Goldberg, Danmark  
Fredrik Malmberg, Sverige - Margret Marín Sigurðardóttir, Island  
Reidar Hjørtnum, Norge