
Preface

The idea of this book comes from our deep wish to convey to younger generations our experience of child abuse. Maltreatment is unfortunately part of pediatric practice in all specialties. Our goal is to lift the denial that surrounds these situations throughout the world and to improve the knowledge of this public health issue, which is painful for everyone—for the young patients as well as for doctors and caregivers. Thus, the detection of subtle signs of abuse should make it possible to at least raise a suspicion of abuse, if not make the diagnosis of maltreatment with certainty, so as to protect the child as soon as possible from a fatal outcome or permanent sequelae that could result from repeated violence.

Our experience stems from our daily medical practice in pediatrics, forensics, and pediatric radiology and from our numerous discussions regarding infants and children possibly victims of abuse. This experience was then enriched by the many lessons learned through years of collaboration with judges, lawyers, investigators, and more generally all the actors of the legal world. Detailed statements from perpetrators of abuse have taught us a great deal about the mechanisms. They also taught us to be careful when dating traumatic events, which we know is often very difficult or impossible because the repetition of violence, whether it be physical or psychological, is unfortunately common.

The variety of topics covered and collaborators involved in this book illustrate the multidisciplinary approach needed when addressing abuse. Pediatricians, pediatric radiologists, neurologists, psychiatrists, pediatric surgeons, pathologists, forensic doctors, caregivers, etc. must work together and communicate with each other and also with social and judicial partners in order to achieve the quickest and most accurate assessment possible regarding the situation of the potentially abused child. The required cooperation between health providers and the justice system is exemplified in two chapters written by magistrates specifically involved in this area.

All of the teams contributing to this book are national or international references in the field of child, fetus, or adolescent abuse. We extend our deepest thanks to the authors and their colleagues for the confidence they have placed in this vast undertaking and for the time they were willing to devote to the writing and reading of these chapters.

This book has been updated and enriched since its French version was published in 2013 (*Maltraitance chez l'enfant*, Ed Lavoisier, Paris, France). We worked in the medical-legal unit of the Hôtel Dieu Hospital, Paris, and in the pediatric radiology

unit at Bicêtre Hospital, Faculté de Médecine Paris Sud University. We would like to thank all our colleagues and teams for the support they constantly provided throughout these long months of writing.

Yves Bot, presiding attorney general at the European Court of Justice, gave us the honor of writing the Preface of this book, illustrating the importance of communication across borders to better detect and therefore better prevent such violence. We express our sincere gratitude to him.

We also thank Professor Henri Nahum for his enthusiasm at the genesis of this project. And we express our appreciation to Lavoisier Editions and Fabienne Roulleaux and her team, especially Beatrice Brottier, who enabled the realization of this project.

We thank Pascale Zerbin for her effectiveness in preparing the manuscripts.

With this book, we wanted to address all aspects of child abuse, from the fetal period through adolescence, focusing on diagnostic elements, which are sometimes difficult to recognize or misleading, and on the differential diagnoses to consider. The book consists of general chapters, chapters dealing with organ damage, and chapters addressing specific issues, such as pathological lesions and postmortem imaging. Therapeutic approaches and main impacts are deliberately summarized. Some chapters are dedicated to epidemiological data, social data (domestic violence), and criminal data, which are key for any doctor involved in this context.

The book contains many illustrations, selected tables and practical examples, and key points summarized at the end of each chapter to enlighten the reader and highlight the fundamental ideas.

The bibliographies are deliberately short and focused mainly on books or basic articles.

This book is intended for any physician or caregiver interested in pediatrics, be they a student, a future specialist, or a practicing practitioner. Outside the medical community, any professional involved in situations of abuse may find answers to the questions that inevitably arise.

We hope that this book will meet readers' expectations and that it will spark the desire to go further and to pool knowledge from all disciplines, thus breaking down the walls between the involved professions for an improved response. Our goal is to protect children.

Paris, France

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Child Abuse

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