Dr Jess Spedding’s Minor Injuries Series

This is a very important group of paediatric patients as it is a common presentation and can cause great anxiety amongst healthcare professionals because of the small risk of there being a serious underlying brain injury accompanying the external signs of injury. Internationally a great deal of work has gone into defining those head injuries which cause sufficient concern to warrant imaging (which is nowadays a CT scan without skull XR in the UK). In the UK we use the NICE guidelines for which there are specific paediatric considerations and variations. See http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/live/11836/36257/36257.pdf and diagram below.

Emotional Neglect and Abuse – Dr Harriet Clompus

‘Emotional neglect is the failure of a parent to provide for the emotional development of the child.’
- Ignoring the child’s need to interact
- Failing to express positive feelings to the child, showing no emotion in interactions with the child
- Denying the child opportunities for interacting and communicating with peers and adults.

‘Emotional abuse includes failure of a care-giver to provide an adequate and supportive environment and includes acts that have an adverse effect on the emotional health and development of a child. Such acts include restricting a child’s movements, derision, ridicule, threats and intimidation, discrimination, rejection and other non-physical forms of hostile treatment.’
- Persistently telling a child they are worthless or unloved
- Bullying a child or frequently making them frightened
- Persistently ridiculing, making fun of or criticising a child.

Core-info, a Cardiff university based research group, examines all areas of child abuse by systematically reviewing worldwide literature and producing recommendations based on best evidence. This is a useful resource for paediatricians, general practitioners, health visitors, nurses, social workers, educators. Find all their reviews at www.core-info.cardiff.ac.uk

Core-info have produced a leaflet in cooperation with National Society of Prevention of Cruelty against Children (NSPCC) following a review in 2011 of the available literature on emotional neglect and abuse in children less than 6 years old. The leaflet is available at www.nspcc.org.uk/info. Definitions of emotional neglect and emotional abuse vary, but all include persistent, harmful interaction with the child by the primary care-giver.

1 in 10 children in the UK experience severe neglect in childhood. See Harriet’s invaluable guide on how to spot emotional neglect and abuse.

Previous editions are all available at www.paediatricpearls.co.uk

Put together by: Dr Julia Thomson, Consultant Paediatrician, julia.thomson@bartshealth.nhs.uk