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Role of Dentist in a case of child abuse

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Abstract:

It is important for dental care providers to be alert to and knowledgeable about signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect and to know how to respond. Because different communities have different resources, not all providers of a certain job specification may be available everywhere, and thus, job roles may sometimes overlap. Some authorities believe that the oral cavity may be a central focus for abuse because of its significance in communication and nutrition. Recent investigations have led to questions about the scientific validity of forensic patterned evidence and its role in legal proceedings. In diagnosis of child abuse, a forensic pathologist can be consulted if a forensic odontologist is not available or not sure about the injuries. Further, if neither forensic odontologist/ pathologist is available, a medical provider or dental provider experienced in identifying the patterns of child abuse injuries may examine and document the cases of child abuse, neglect and domestic violence.

Keywords: Forensic evidence, Forensic photography, Child abuse, Child Neglect