

Kids with abusive moms may suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder

Many children whose mothers are emotionally or physically abused develop symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, according to a University of Michigan study forthcoming in the Journal of Interpersonal Violence.

More than half of the 64 children studied suffered from unwanted, intrusive memories or "flashbacks" of the violence, and 42 percent had sleep problems, difficulty concentrating or other symptoms of traumatic arousal, such as extreme vigilance.

About 3.3 million children each year are estimated to wit-

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that you are estimated to must make the domestic abuse of their much are the state of the the state of the state of the state of the Journal of Emotional Abuse, by U-M psychologist Sandra Gra-ham-Bermann and Michigan State University psychologist Alytia Levendosky, found that exposure to their mother's emo-tional or physical abuse was linked to significant behavioral and emotional problems in chil dren as young as preschool age. "You don't have to wait for

years to see the effects on children when their mothers are abused, says Graham-Bermann. "It shows up while they're still very young in a variety of ways, expecially the way they act toward other children."

For the preschool study, pairs of trained observers recorded the social interactions and emotional adjustment of 25 children of battered women and 26 children from nonviolent homes. Each child was observed at play in a small group setting on three separate occasions.

Children of battered women showed higher rates of sadness, depression, worry and frustration than peers from nonviolent homes. Their emotional responses to events were less appropriate, and they were more likely to express anger and frustration by hitting, biting or slapping others, even when unprovoked. Thoy were also found to verbally abuse their peers, by insulting them and calling them names, more that did children from nonviolent families.

Children of abused mothers were also more likely to cope

been eye witnesses to violence against their mothors. The violence ranged from verbal threats to severe physical aggression, including punching and kicking. In the course of a year, the children were exposed to an avorage of 72 such incidents. Using information from the children's teachers as well as their mothers, the researchers found that 13 percent of the children met all the criteries for a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder. These included being exposed to, and intensely upset by, the violence toward the mother. About one-third of the children either had intrusive memories of the violence or tried to avoid thinking about it. About 25 percent were hyper-vigilant and startled easily. Haft the children either had intrusive memories of the violence or tried to avoid thinking about it. About 26 percent were hyper-vigilant and startled easily. Haft the children were irritable and had troube thinking or paying attention. Boys were as likely as girls to display these and other symptoms of PTSD.

When children are having problems in school, it's important to ask questions about violence that may be going on in the family," says Graham-Bermann.

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\$752,500 in such grants to 642
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employees participated in the
program this year, up from
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direct our resources, said Lisa
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are 'threefold: to recognige
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service, to provide an incentive
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donate their time, and to link the Ameritech Foundation's grant making with employee involvement."

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"They have a long-standing desire to strengthen their communities and empower their eighbors, and they willingly offer their time and talent to make a difference." Hamway added.

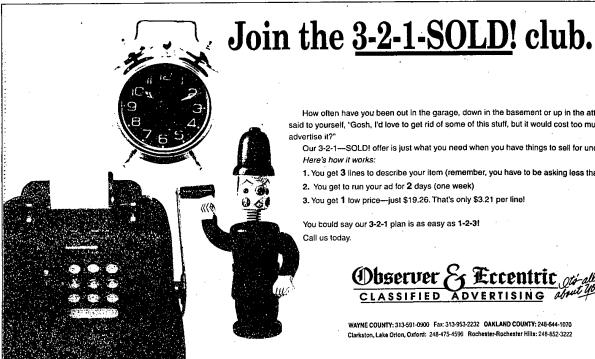
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