Level of Child Functionality and Caregiver Report of Physical Assault

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Theory

Concerned with disability as a risk factor for future physical abuse

Assumes a linear relationship between disability and maltreatment

- Dependency stress
- Inability to avoid or resist
- Number of caretakers

Possible curvilinear effect?
Purpose

Examine the association between separate continuous measures of functional abilities within specific domains – behavior problems, social skills, daily-living skills, and language development - and the prevalence of both minor and severe physical assault.
Methods

National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being - CPS

• Baseline data: 1999
• N=1678; ages 3 to 10 living with biological parent
• Caregiver and Child Interviews

Outcome Variables:

Minor and Severe Physical Assault – CTS-PC

Independent Variables – Standardized Scores:

Behavioral problems
Social skills
Daily-Living skills
Language development scores
Results

Minor assault: 78%
Severe assault: 9%

Bivariate and multivariate relationships(*)

- Younger age and minor assault
- Older age and severe assault*
- African-American and minor assault*
- African-American and Hispanic and severe assault*
- Poor parental health and severe assault
Level of Functionality

Behavior
Social
Daily Living

Odds of a Severe Assault
Conclusion
The relationship between disability and physical abuse depends on type of functionality domain (behavioral, social, daily-living, or language), child’s level of ability, and severity of physical assault.

Linear:
- Behavior problems and minor assault
- Social skills and minor assault
- Behavior problems and severe assault

Curvilinear:
- Language development and minor assault
- Social skills and severe assault
- Daily-living skills and severe assault

Possible explanations and Implications?
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