

MÜNCHAUSEN SYNDROME BY PROXY - A CASE REPORT

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Introduction: Münchausen Syndrome by Proxy (MSP) is a form of child abuse in which a parent induces real symptoms of diseases in a child, even leading to hospitalization. It was described in 1977 by the Pediatrician Roy Meadow.

In Brazil, The Statute of the Child and Adolescent, passed in 1990, outlines the procedures for all abuse and neglect proceedings.

Objectives: To show the symptoms and evidences of this Syndrome in order to provide an early recognition of those cases.

Aims: To prevent this kind of child abuse which can bring harmful effects in the child's life, even causing death.

Methods: Evaluation of a case report that was studied by Psychiatrists in Rio de Janeiro, in which the prosecutor wanted to know whether or not the children could be released from protected custody, considering the suspicion of MSP and the fact that one of the child had already died.

Results: The woman didn't show any Psychiatry Disorder by the time of the evaluation, but her behavior suggested psychological difficulties as being a mother. It was suggested that she and her husband needed psychological intervention and that the children still needed the Council of Guardianship's care and protection proceedings.

Conclusions: The MSP can be difficult to be diagnosed and is still considered a controversial phenomenon. It doesn't have a clear cause but occurs because of psychological problems in the adult, and is generally an attention-seeking behavior. The syndrome can be life-threatening for the child involved.