The IOM Tackles Bullying
Ellen Selkie, MD, FAAP
SOYP Member Since May 2013

The Institute of Medicine's workshop, Building Capacity to Reduce Bullying and Its Impact on Youth Across the Lifecourse, was held on April 9-10 at the National Academies of Science in Washington, DC. As an adolescent medicine fellow with a research focus on cyberbullying, I attended the workshop to hear and share the perspectives of the nation's leading bullying researchers on the nature, impact, and prevention of bullying.

The CDC defines bullying as "unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths who are not siblings or current dating partners that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated."{1} Notably, bullying falls on the spectrums of aggression and violence, but not all violent or aggressive behaviors are necessarily bullying.

Some fascinating research at the workshop examined the neurobiologic impacts of bullying. Neuroimaging studies show that victims of verbal bullying and exclusion have increased activation of cortical pain pathways. Furthermore, victims of bullying have been found to have abnormal cortisol levels and disruption of the HPA axis, which can disrupt neurogenesis in the developing prefrontal cortex and hippocampus and lead to poorer memory and decreased school performance. These findings are powerful indicators of the need for prevention efforts, which may be able to impact the health and developmental trajectories of youth affected by bullying.

At the workshop, the role of health care providers in addressing bullying was presented as having three components: awareness, advocacy, and anticipatory guidance. Providers were encouraged to review the AAP's toolkit on violence prevention, Connected Kids (http://patiented.aap.org/categoryBrowse.aspx?catID=28—NOTE Patient Education Online subscription required) as a starting point. Counseling parents and patients about social connectedness is also important; one presenter's research showed that having just one friend decreased risk for bullying, while another study showed that spending time with friends after a simulated bullying situation resulted in less distress.

It was incredibly inspiring to see so many experts come together to discuss bullying. I look forward to integrating the content of this workshop into my own research and practice. For more information on the workshop including webcast and presentation slides, visit http://www.iom.edu/Activities/Children/ReducingBullying/2014-APR-01.aspx.

Connected Kids is currently undergoing a redesign and will soon launch with fresh, updated parent handouts that will be available on Patient Education Online. The program is also available at no cost to residency programs by e-mailing a request to: connectedkids@aap.org.

Reference:

Hearing Screening Tools for Medical Home Providers— A High Yield Follow Up
Michelle Esquivele, MPH, AAP Staff

Since 2000, the percentage of newborns screened for hearing loss has dramatically increased from 52% to 95%.{1} However, almost half of the children who "do not pass" hearing screening tests lack a documented diagnosis. An infant who does not pass his/her newborn hearing screening has a potential developmental emergency. A wait and see approach is never appropriate. Unidentified hearing loss at birth can adversely affect speech and language development as well as academic achievement and social-emotional development. Learn more by visiting http://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/PEHDIC/Pages/Early-Hearing-Detection-and-Intervention.aspx (the "Loss to Follow-Up" section) to access these tools.

Reference:
The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Bronwen Anders, MD, FAAP, AAP Senior Section
Ayesha Kadir, MD, FAAP

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is a treaty that promotes the human rights of children worldwide. Although the U.S. was instrumental in drafting the CRC, we remain one of 3 nations left to ratify it. Now is a great opportunity to combine the advocacy efforts of the Section on Senior Members and Section on International Child Health with the energy of the Section on Young Physicians on this issue.

Dr. Jeffrey Goldhagen has authored an AAP policy statement on equity, which was published in Pediatrics in 2010. He has also developed CRC teaching modules and a toolkit for implementation at the local level, in order to make the convention meaningful to children in their everyday lives.

New developments in efforts to ratify the CRC:
- This year, the ALF (Annual Leadership Forum) named the CRC resolution as one of the top ten resolutions. This designation can help encourage the U.S. President and Senate to ratify the CRC.
- Aaron Emmel, AAP’s Department of Federal Affairs’ new manager, can help support and guide efforts to promote ratification of the CRC, and to help pediatricians worldwide implement aspects of child rights in their workplaces.

The AAP Campaign is planning two activities:
1. A social media campaign and other activities around Universal Children’s Day, on November 20, 2014.
2. Another request to the Obama Administration to send the treaty to the Senate.

We can advance child rights and lobbying efforts for ratification as a united AAP group if guided by AAP Federal Affairs. As pediatricians, we could lobby handpicked senators, and provide individual testimony.

The U.S already meets most of the standards of the CRC. So why is ratification important? There is little or no record of which standards our country meets and which standards we still need to improve upon. We consider the United States to be a world leader in human rights—we must prove this both in practice and in law.

If you want to play a more active role, please review the documents and contact Bronwen Anders at BAnders@UCSD.edu or Ayesha Kadir at KadirA@gmail.com.

References:
1. Health Equity and Children’s Rights
2. Post-Secondary Child Rights Courses and Curricula
3. Child Rights Campaign

District VI Update

Patie Quigley, MD, MME, FAAP
District VI Representative
SOYP Member since December 30, 2010

Having recently returned from our District Meeting in Baltimore, District VI membership is re-energized to address the needs of our children. As such, two new initiatives have emerged. The Illinois Chapter has started a District VI newsletter on poverty to promote collaboration between states on this very important (and enormous) problem, which has quickly gained lots of momentum. The other universal issue our chapters are facing head-on is disaster preparedness. In fact, most of last night’s district conference call was dedicated to this matter. Under the guidance of the Kansas Chapter (which quickly developed a plan after the devastation in Joplin, MO), each state has been identifying resources and needs so that children can be appropriately cared for when disaster strikes.

With these new initiatives, there will be new opportunities for leadership in this district. Fortunately, our Young Physicians will soon be ready to answer the call to lead. Seven YPs from District VI (of the total 30 attendees) will be attending the upcoming Young Physicians Leadership Alliance (YPLA) at the AAP National Convention and Exhibition (NCE) in San Diego. It is a privilege to work with so many people dedicated to improving the lives of kids in the heartland.
cont. SOYP SOAP NOTES...

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