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Poster Presentations

Jason H. Zahn, Emergency Health Services

“Perspectives in Child Abuse: A Preliminary Investigative Report of Baltimore City Fire Department Prehospital Care Provider”

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Child abuse and neglect are heinous crimes that are all too common an occurrence within the United States. Child abuse and neglect are encompassed by the following comprehensive definition: “at a minimum, any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker, which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation, or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm” (Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, 1996).

This study investigated the perspectives of Baltimore City Fire Department (BCFD) Prehospital Care Providers (Emergency Medical Service (EMS) providers) with respect to the issue of reporting suspected child abuse and neglect. A non-random sample of 250 prehospital care providers employed by the BCFD Medical Bureau were surveyed regarding their overall tendencies- including attitude, frequency, rationale and patterns- of reporting suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. Variations in the behavior and perspective of providers were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The overall findings of this study indicate that the majority of BCFD prehospital care providers regularly report suspected cases of abuse and neglect to the appropriate authorities. The study also brings attention to the need for additional education in the area of child abuse for EMS providers.