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Determining Child Abuse Potential with the Child Guidance Interview Subscales

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Determining Child Abuse Potential with the Child Guidance Interview Subscales
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Introduction
- Skinner et al. (2005) have identified categories of adaptive and maladaptive parental behaviors which were used to develop the Child Guidance Interview (CGI).
- The CGI (Infant/Preschool Form) measures parental behaviors that may be predictive of parents’ abuse status.
- The frequencies of adaptive and maladaptive subcategory codes and demographic information were examined to determine whether they also predict likely types of abuse.

Materials and Methods
- 149 parents were interviewed about how they would respond to a preschooler’s grocery store tantrum and responses were recorded, then transcribed. Follow-up questions were posed regarding options if first and second responses failed.
- Current and previous members of a research team coded transcripts for adaptive (warmth, structure, autonomy support) and maladaptive (rejection, chaos, coercion) categories along with selected sub-categories.
- Totals for each code type were calculated along with total word counts for each transcript. Code type frequencies were adjusted to control for transcript word counts, as parents’ verbosity varied.
- Likelihood of child abuse subtypes and parents’ own abuse histories, as well as other demographic data were identified from archived psychological evaluations using several coding systems.
- Correlations were calculated between likelihood of each abuse subtype, CGI responses, and demographics. T-tests also were used to compare abuse/no abuse status for CGI responses and demographics.

Results
Pearson’s r and t scores were calculated. While some CGI variables were related to child abuse or neglect status, correlations and mean differences were modest, suggesting that they were inadequate to predict abuse/neglect. Some CGI variables showed results reverse of what we would expect, e.g., “Warmth” statements predicted physical abuse; “Coercion” and “Rejection” predicted absence of abuse; “Role Reversal” predicted absence of neglect. Conversely, “Adaptive Guidance,” “Structure” “Meta-Parenting” statements predicted absence of abuse. These results show that the CGI has potential to predict child abuse but may need more analyses.

Conclusions and Implications
- Though analysis of some t-test and correlation results suggest that certain demographics and frequencies of subcode responses were predictive of certain types of abuse, some results were counterintuitive.
- T-test results counterintuitively suggested that the likelihood of neglect decreases with higher instances of role reversal statements, indicating that role reversal may not be a predictor of neglect. This could be attributed to the definition used for role reversal and the categorization it was placed under.
- Physical abuse was also correlated with higher instances of warmth statements which suggests that these parents were attempting to “fake good” or that physically abusive parents show more warmth to their children.
- Rejection and coercion responses were correlated negatively with all types of abuse, suggesting that these subcode categories are not predictive of abuse overall.
- The limited scope of the tantrum scenario is a possible confound because it presents a hypothetical scenario and a parent might actually respond differently.

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References