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SPECIFIC PERSONALITY ATTRIBUTES OF CHILD-ABUSING MOTHERS

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ABSTRACT

A review of the literature on child abuse was presented. Ten abusive mothers were compared to ten mothers who had disturbed, behavioral-problem children, and to a group of ten "normal" mothers from the same economic background. These three groups were compared on the ratings of caseworkers and of the Experimenter on various scales and on a projective test. The hypothesis that the abusive mothers would be providing poorer overall care for their children and that they would demonstrate poorer psychological and social maturity was supported. A Simple Random Analysis of Variance and a Duncan's Multiple-Range Test revealed that the abusive mothers provided significantly poorer child care than the other two groups and that the abusive mothers were significantly more immobilized, more detached, more impulsive, and more dependent than the mothers in the other two groups. In addition, the abusive mothers had significantly poorer educational and occupational experience than the other groups. These findings were discussed in terms of present child abuse theory. Implications for prevention and treatment were considered.

SPECIFIC PERSONALITY ATTRIBUTES OF CHILD-ABUSING MOTHERS¹

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The psychological and social phenomenon of child abuse is not new to our culture. Societies of the past have exhibited varying degrees of permissiveness and apathy toward the murder and abuse of children (Gil, 1970; Radbill, 1968). In our time and culture such treatment is regarded with outrage. However, only in the past fifteen years have the medical, legal, psychiatric, social work, and psychological professions addressed themselves to the questions of why does a parent physically abuse his or her child. Kempe, Silverman, Steele, Droegemueller, and Silver (1962) coined the phrase "battered-child syndrome" in their attempt to study the problem. Paulsen (1966, 1968a, 1968b) has looked at child abuse from the legal aspects and pointed out that the problem is enhanced by legal uncertainties and lack of conformity.

A review of the literature on child abuse offers many opinions as to the etiological causes of child abuse and the personality attributes of the abusing parent, however there are few statistically defensible findings. Spinetta & Rigler (1972)

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have recently presented a most thorough review of the literature which attempts to label the psychological and social causes of child abuse. In their review they listed five major areas in which researchers have looked for the social and personality characteristics which contribute to child abuse. The first of these is the demographic characteristics. Numerous studies have been conducted to determine the demographic characteristics of abusive parents in the hope that these studies might show whether or not social and economic position is a determining factor in child abuse. (A high incidence of divorce, separation, and unstable marriages with severe conflict as well as conviction of minor criminal offenses, other than child abuse, has been found to occur in families where child-abuse is prevalent" (Kempe et al., 1962; Sattin & Miller, 1971; Schloesser, 1964; Zalba, 1966). Unwanted pregnancies, "forced" marriages, and large families where one child is singled out as the victim are other characteristics (Boardman, 1962; Delsordo, 1963; Elmer, 1963; Kempe et al., 1962; Schloesser, 1964; Zalba, 1966). Other studies have indicated that lack of family roots, lack of community ties or interests, high mobility, unemployment, and financial problems including inability to budget adequate incomes are other predominate demographic characteristics of the child-abusing parent or parents" (Elmer, 1960, 1963; Gil, 1968a, 1968b, 1970; Holter & Friedman, 1968; Johnson & Morse, 1968; Merrill, 1962; Schloesser, 1964; Young, 1964). The majority of these studies, with the exception of Gil (1968a, 1968b, 1970), who sees a

strong link between poverty and child abuse, concluded however that not all child abuse occurs in low socioeconomic groups which have many of the characteristics stated above. Rather they suggested that the incidence is higher in this group due to social and economic stresses. In the Sattin & Miller (1971) study all of the families were concentrated in a low-income neighborhood but the authors suggested that the family's choice of living quarters was due to financial stress and inadequate, marginal adjustment. Two studies which have given further evidence against all child-abusers being from low-income families are those of Merrill (1962) and Steele & Pollock (1968). Both of these studies were conducted among middle- to upper-income families where child abuse had occurred. Many of the homes involved in these studies met or exceeded middle-class standards for furnishings and cleanliness and as Merrill states, the parents would be classified as "upstanding citizens."

With the exception of the few studies (Merrill, 1962; Steele & Pollock, 1968) conducted among middle-class families, most of the research concerning child abuse has centered on the low-income family. One of the reasons for this seems to be that child abuse is harder to hide in low-income families and therefore appears to be more prevalent. However the literature certainly doesn't support any suggestion that poverty necessitates child abuse and poor child care. This has been pointed out in the recent extensive research effort conducted by Polansky, Borgman, & De Saix (1972) on the care of children of the very poor and the personality variables which these

children's mothers exhibited. Although Polansky et al. (1972) did find extremely poor child care prevalent in the homes of neglectful mothers in the rural mountains of North Carolina and Georgia, they also saw many families living in the same poverty who provided adequate and even excellent care for their children.

A second area where researchers have looked for the causes of child abuse is parental history. The concept that violence breeds violence and that the parents of abused children were themselves abused as children has been hypothesized and researched (Reiner & Kaufman, 1959; Schloesser, 1964; Silver, Dublin, & Lourie, 1969). Steele & Pollock (1968) have stated that abusing parents were deprived of basic "motherliness" as children and had harsh, rigid demands placed upon them. They, like Oliver & Taylor (1971), have referred to the studies of Harlow & Harlow (1962) which showed how female monkeys raised without adequate mothers were themselves inadequate, even abusive mothers. The controlled study of child abuse by Melnick & Hurley (1969) has stated that there is a probable history of emotional deprivation in the abusive mother's own upbringing. Further support for all these factors is seen in the studies of Kempe et al. (1962) and Wasserman (1967). Polansky et al. (1972) also found further evidence for what they labeled the "cycle of poverty." By looking at the educational, occupational, and dating backgrounds of neglectful mothers as well as these mother's families they found that women who were providing poor care for their children were

themselves likely to have come from families which offered only marginal care.

A third area in which researchers have looked for clues as to the nature of the abusing parent is in the parental attitudes toward child-rearing. Numerous studies have found that abusing parents are unrealistic as well as ignorant about their child's capabilities. They expect a great deal from their children and do so earlier than the child can possibly meet these high expectations (Morris, Gould, & Matthew, 1964; Oliver & Taylor, 1971; Steele & Pollock, 1968). Other studies have revealed that abusive parents look to their children for reassurance, comfort, and love and that the children are expected to fulfill the parent's needs (Melnick & Hurley, 1969; Oliver & Taylor, 1971). Still other studies have stated that physical abuse of children implies a distortion of reality in that the child is a target perceived by the parent in a symbolic or delusional way (Reiner & Kaufman, 1959). Terr's (1970) study of families with child abuse occurrences supported this hypothesis when she stated that in each case which she observed, the abusing parent had a specific fantasy about the abused child. These fantasies included fear of the infant's helplessness, fear of the child's seductiveness, or disappointment in the child's ability to meet preconceived hopes.

The fourth area in which researchers have sought characteristics of child-abusing parents is a very controversial one. This is the question of whether or not there is the presence of severe personality disorders in the abusing parent. Some

studies have suggested that all child-abusers are either extreme neurotics or psychotics, but most researchers have dismissed psychopathology except in extreme cases (Greenard, 1964; Spinetta & Rigler, 1972; Steele & Pollock, 1968; Wasserman, 1967). Flynn (1970) concluded that abusing parents are not psychotic but that these parents have extraordinary reliance on ego-defense mechanisms of repression, denial, and projection causing an incapacity to learn from experience and to appreciate realistically the possible and inevitable consequences of their actions. Polansky et al. (1972) found that marginal child care was part of a pervasive pattern of the mother's character which included lack of psychic maturity and ego strength. These researchers coined the phrase "apathy-futility syndrome" to describe the deep sense of futility and emotional and behavioral numbness witnessed in neglectful mothers and seen in the care they gave their children.

Finally, Spinetta & Rigler (1972) in their review of the literature pointed out that researchers have attempted to define the motivational and personality variables which contribute to and precipitate child abuse. Child-abusing parents have been described as impulse-ridden individuals who are unable to control their aggressions. Anger, rigidity, hypersensitivity, and self-centeredness are also given as characteristics by these same studies (Holter & Friedman, 1968; Kempe et al., 1962; Silver et al., 1969). Young (1964) cited chronic aggressiveness as the major attribute which she has observed in abusive parents. Kempe et al. (1962) also have seen abusive parents as extremely

dependent and narcissistic. Emotional immaturity has been observed in abusive parents by other researchers (Holter & Friedman, 1968; Oliver & Taylor, 1971). Silver et al. (1969) have suggested that abusive parents tend to have poor interpersonal relationships and exhibit marked poor adjustment in general. Holter & Friedman (1968) have also found chronic depression and severe guilt feelings over things other than the child abuse to be indicative of abusing parents.

Using the observations and professional opinions of many researchers, both Merrill (1962) and Zalba (1967) have attempted to identify the problem of child abuse by developing typologies for classification and for treatment. These typologies as well as the many individual clinical impressions have done much to shed light on the question of why parents abuse their children, but there has been almost no systematic testing of the hypotheses which have been presented.

With the exception of one study (Melnick & Hurley, 1969), the literature is void of adequately controlled studies on child abuse. Melnick & Hurley (1969) did compare a group of abusive mothers to a control group, but they themselves suggested that a third group of mothers of disturbed children should have been included because abusive mothers may be confronted with dealing with a more disturbed child. All research to date on child-abusing mothers has been conducted using women in clinics or hospitals who knew they were being interviewed because they were suspected of abusing their children. There have been no field studies in which the subjects

were unaware of the purpose of the investigation. It is a reasonable assumption that mothers who knew the reason why they were being interviewed would be less responsive and therefore the results of these studies may tend to be questionable. The majority of the data on child abuse has come from clinical impressions based on case histories. There has been almost no systematic testing of these clinical impressions which comprise the child abuse literature. The purpose of this study was to provide adequate controls in order to statistically define specific personality attributes which are characteristic of child-abusing mothers.

A group of child-abusing mothers was compared to a group of mothers who had disturbed, behavioral-problem children and to a group of "normal" mothers from the same economic background. These three groups were compared on the ratings of caseworkers and the Experimenter on various scales and on a projective test. The characteristics measured by these scales and the projective test were 1) level of child care given by the mother, 2) behavioral immobilization, 3) interpersonal detachment, 4) impulsivity, 5) dependency, 6) ability to verbalize freely, 7) level of educational and occupational achievement, and 8) conflict resolution capacity. The subjects were all unaware of the purpose of the investigation. It was predicted that the group of abusing mothers would be providing poorer overall care for their children and that they would demonstrate poorer psychological and social maturity and competency on the variables being assessed.

Method

Subjects

Ten abusive mothers (A), who had been reported to the Departments of Social Services of two western counties of North Carolina for suspected child abuse were compared to 10 mothers (B) who had sought professional help or who had been referred to the Departments of Social Services because of behavioral and emotional problems with their children, and to 10 "normal" control mothers (C) who were receiving financial assistance (AFDC - Aid to Families with Dependent Children) through the Departments of Social Services.

Testing Materials

Each subject was assessed on three psychological instruments and was interviewed by the Experimenter. The Maternal Characteristics Scale (MCS), developed by The University of Georgia Child Research Field Station staff (Polansky et al., 1972), was used to measure maternal competency and maturity (see Appendix I for scale items and scoring procedures). The scales of this tool concentrate on three aspects of personality including (1) apathy-futility dimension, combining behavioral immobilization and interpersonal detachment; (2) childish-impulsivity dimension, combining impulsivity and dependency; and (3) verbal accessibility, a composite scale measuring an individual's readiness to talk about his most important attitudes and feelings and to engage in discussion of them with another person.

Each subject was rated on the Maternal Characteristics Scale by a caseworker familiar with the subject and also by the Experimenter. Although both the caseworkers and the Experimenter knew to which group the mothers belonged, the caseworkers did not know which items on the MCS made up the various scales. None of the items on the MCS refer to child abuse. Rather the items are concerned solely with the characteristics of the maternal personality. Since the answering of the MCS items called for a value-judgment on the part of the rater (i. e. "Says she enjoys living."), both the scores of the caseworker and the Experimenter were used. This helped to alleviate both experimenter bias as well as the fact that the various caseworkers may have used different standards to rate subjects. An overall interrater reliability of +0.81 was found using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (r). The final score used for each of the three scales was a mean of the caseworker's and the Experimenter's scores.

The Childhood Level of Living Scale (CLLS), also developed by The University of Georgia Child Research Field Station staff (Polansky et al., 1972), was used as an indicator of the physical and emotional conditions under which the children of the subjects are reared (see Appendix II for scale items and scoring procedures). This rating scale was completed by the subject's caseworker and/or by a homemaker from the Department of Social Services who was familiar with the home situation. The majority of the items on this scale are objective ("Water is piped into the house."). Each rater was briefed prior to

completing the scale as to how to assess such words as "usually" or "sometimes."

Using the social history of the subject, each mother was assigned a score on the Education-Occupation Index (Polansky et al., 1972). Each subject was rated by the Experimenter according to the amount of education she had received and whether or not and for how long she had been employed (see Appendix III for scoring procedures).

Finally, during the interview with the subject, the Experimenter presented six Thematic Apperception Cards (Nos. 1, 3GF, 5, 6BM, 6GF, and 7GF). The subject was asked five questions about each card: "What do you see? How does the person act? How does he get treated? What will he do? and What will happen?" These responses were scored by a psychologist who was familiar with the scoring system developed by Polansky et al. (1972) and who did not know to which group the mothers belonged (see footnote 2). This system scores each card according to the maturity which the individual shows in resolving conflict. Evasive, irrelevant responses which show no progressive steps in arriving at a resolution received a score of one. If the response given indicated that the conflict continued or action was taken to perpetuate the conflict, a score of two was given. A score of three was given to responses which indicated that a solution was achieved by the suppression of the needs or the rights of one party. And finally, responses which showed mutual yielding, realistic compromise or the deterring of immediate gratification for

long-range goals received a score of four. The scores of each card were combined to give an overall conflict resolution score.

Design

The design of the study included three treatment groups, A, B, and C. Each group contained 10 subjects. The three groups were compared to one another on six measures. These included (1) the Childhood Level of Living Scale, (2) the Apathy-Futility Scale, (3) the Childish-Impulsivity Scale, (4) the Verbal Accessibility Scale, (5) the Education-Occupation Index, and (6) the Conflict Resolution Score obtained from TAT responses.

Group A consisted of mothers who had abused their children. The North Carolina Child Abuse Reporting Law of 1971 in Article Eight of the General Statutes, Chapter 110 defines an abused child as

any child less than sixteen years of age whose parent or caretaker inflicts (or allows to be inflicted) a physical injury by other than accidental means which causes a substantial risk of death, disfigurement, impairment of physical health, or loss or impairment of a body organ, or who creates (or allows to be created) a situation in which there is substantial risk that one of the above events will occur, or who commits (or allows to be committed) a sex act upon a child in violation of law (Thomas, 1971, p. 5).

Following the lead of other researchers on child abuse (Kempe et al., 1962; Melnick & Hurley, 1969; Spinetta & Rigler, 1972; Zalba, 1966), this study eliminated sex abusers of children

because the majority of professional opinions indicate different motivational and personality variables in the child-sex-abuser. Mothers who had neglected, but not abused, their children were also eliminated from this study. The criteria defining child abuse were based on several factors. The definition given above was the main criterion, however mothers who had just allowed abuse to occur rather than actually abusing their children were eliminated. This controlled for the fact that there is considerable disagreement among professionals concerning whether or not persons who allow abuse to occur possess the same personality traits as those persons who actually abuse a child. Further criteria for defining child abuse were actual eye-witness accounts of the abuse, admission of the abuse by the mother, the investigation and reports of caseworkers, and in some cases, the actual legal removal of the child from the home due to abuse.

Group B was used to control for the fact that mothers in the A group might have been confronted with dealing with a more disturbed child than those faced by the C group. The B group mothers were those parents who were having difficulties in their relationships with their children but where there had been no evidence of child abuse. This group was entirely composed of mothers who had children on juvenile probation or in juvenile training schools. Group B also controlled for the involuntariness factor found in the A group since neither abusing mothers nor mothers of children on probation usually readily seek help. Rather they are typically forced by legal

and social pressures in their relationship with helping agencies.

The Group C AFDC mothers acted as a control for socio-economic class factors. The mothers in this group had no history of child abuse or neglect and there were no indications of emotional or behavioral problems in their children. Due to the homogeneity of these three groups on most social indices, they were not matched further on other variables. Employment and years of education were examined as dependent variables. The independent variable was the division of the subjects into the three groups as stated above.

Procedure

Prior to meeting any of the mothers, the Experimenter met with the caseworker for each subject. Background factual data were obtained from each mother's social history and the caseworkers were briefed on the completion of the Maternal Characteristics Scale and the Childhood Level of Living Scale. Contact was then made with the subject by the caseworker by telephone and/or a homevisit. The caseworkers explained to each subject that a graduate student from Appalachian State University was interested in talking to different mothers about rearing children in today's society. Permission was obtained from each mother for the E to visit in her home and a time for the homevisit was scheduled. No subject contacted refused to schedule a visit.

Each mother was seen by the E in her own home. The E introduced herself and explained that she was doing a study on

"what it's like to be a mother today." The interviews lasted from an hour to an hour and 15 minutes. The E began each interview by using open-ended questions designed to establish rapport, e. g. "Do you think it's harder today to be a mother than when you grew up?" With the exception of the administration of the six Thematic Apperception cards the interviews were unstructured. The E allowed the mother to introduce topics of conversation and only with extremely verbally non-responsive mothers did the E direct the course of the interview. If the subject introduced the topic of child abuse or of her child's delinquency, the E feigned ignorance of the facts, thus reducing the mother's possible defensiveness on those topics.

Once the E had met with a subject, the E completed the Maternal Characteristics Scale. The Maternal Characteristics Scale and the Childhood Level of Living Scale completed by the caseworker were then collected. The TAT responses were then given to the psychologist.

Results

The dependent variables for this study were the scores obtained by each subject on the five rating measures and on the TAT responses. The mean score for each group of subjects was obtained on the six measures. These mean scores are shown in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

The scores given for the Apathy-Futility, the Childish-Impul-

sivity, and the Verbal Accessibility Scales are the means of the caseworkers and E scores. For the Childhood Level of Living Scale, higher scores indicate poorer, less adequate conditions of child care. For the Apathy-Futility Scale and the Childish-Impulsivity Scale, higher scores indicate less maturity and greater presence of the characteristics which these scales measure. A higher score on the Verbal Accessibility Scale indicates greater readiness to talk and to reveal attitudes and feelings to others. Higher scores on the Education-Occupation Index indicate a greater amount of educational and work experience. The higher scores on the TAT Conflict Resolution Score indicate greater ability in resolving conflicts in a mature, responsible manner. As shown by the data in Table 1, Group A of abusing mothers did poorer on all the measures with the exception of the TAT Conflict Resolution Score. Simple random analyses of variance (Bruning & Kintz, 1968) were used to assess the relationships of the means of the groups for each of the dependent variables. This was followed in appropriate cases by applying the Duncan's Multiple-Range Test (Bruning & Kintz, 1968) to ascertain multiple comparisons among means.

The data in Table 2 indicate that there was an overall significant difference at the .01 level in the type of child care provided by the three groups. Multiple comparisons among means showed that Groups A and C, and Groups A and B differed significantly ($p < .05$) in terms of overall child care. The A groups thus showed significantly poorer overall child care

than both the B and C groups.

Insert Table 2 about here

Table 3 shows that on the Apathy-Futility Scale there was also a significant difference ($p < .05$) in the presence of the two characteristics, behavioral immobilization and interpersonal detachment, which this scale measures. Multiple comparisons among means showed that the A groups mothers were significantly ($p < .05$) more immobilized and more detached than either the B or C group mothers.

Insert Table 3 about here

On the Childish-Impulsivity Scale (as shown in Table 4) there were again significant differences at the .001 level in the presence of impulsivity and dependency, the personality traits which this scale measures. Multiple comparisons among means revealed that the A group mothers were significantly ($p < .05$) more impulsive and more dependent than the Group C or Group B mothers.

Insert Table 4 about here

The data in Table 5 indicate that there were no significant overall differences in the presence of verbal accessibility among the three groups.

Insert Table 5 about here

Table 6 shows that for the educational and occupational level of the groups there were significant differences at the .01 level. Further multiple comparisons indicate that Group A mothers had significantly ($p < .05$) lower educational and occupational achievements than either Group B or Group C mothers.

Insert Table 6 about here

Finally, the data in Table 7 shows that at the .05 level there were no significant differences among the three groups in terms of their performance on the TAT Conflict Resolution Score.

Insert Table 7 about here

Because the results of the TAT Conflict Resolution Score did not follow the pattern established by the previous measures, a chi-square was used to assess the relationship of the Education-Occupation Index and the TAT Conflict Resolution Score. The results of this showed that the correlation between these two measures was not significant ($\chi^2 = 2.310$, $\phi = -.26$).

Discussion

The original hypothesis that the abusive mothers would be providing poorer overall care for their children and that they would demonstrate poorer psychological and social maturity and competency on the variables being assessed was supported by all of the measures with the exception of the Verbal Accessibility Scale and the TAT Conflict Resolution Score. Despite the absence of significant differences, it should be noted that the A group of abusive mothers did show less verbal accessibility than either Groups B or C. However because of the lack of significance, the abusive mother could not be characterized as being any less ready to talk about her most important attitudes and feelings and to engage in discussion of them with another person. One of the reasons for this lack of significant results may be that one of the criterion for selecting the mothers in each of the three groups was their willingness to talk with the E.

The results of the TAT Conflict Resolution Score raise several interesting questions. Even though the results of this measure were not significant, they were entirely opposite from the other results. One possible explanation for this is that the TAT Conflict Resolution Score is an invalid measure of the maturity a person shows in resolving conflicts. Unlike the original study (Polansky et. al., 1972) in which the TAT Conflict Resolution Score and the Education-Occupation Index were used, this present study did not find a significant correlation between the TAT and the Education-Occupation Index. Polansky et.

al. (1972) explained their significant correlation between these two measures by the argument that a person with more education who had demonstrated ability to be employed would also demonstrate greater maturity in resolving conflicts. If this position is a valid one, it would be expected that the abusive mothers, who did have significantly poorer educational and work records, would have scored lower than the other groups on the TAT Conflict Resolution Score. Since this expectation was not confirmed, it could be hypothesized that the TAT measure itself is invalid in that it is not measuring conflict resolution maturity.

An alternative explanation for the TAT results is that this measure, as shown by its lack of discrimination among the three groups, is not as sensitive as the other measures used. All the women in this sample were homogeneous with respect to economic level and social class. Child abuse and problem children were the main discriminating factors. It therefore could be hypothesized that the TAT Conflict Resolution Score doesn't tap the characteristics prevalent in the child-abuser.

One final counterargument can be presented. If the TAT Conflict Resolution measure is accepted as a valid one, then there must be some explanation for the abusive mothers higher mean score. It may be that abusive mothers actually do show greater ability at resolving conflicts, however these conflicts are not resolved in a socially acceptable manner. Rather they may have a predilection to resolve interpersonal conflicts through primitive expressions of feeling.

The results on the Childhood Level of Living Scale indicate that the abusive mothers provided poorer overall physical and emotional care for their children. These results suggest that although abuse and neglect of children are legally and dynamically viewed as separate phenomena, it cannot be said that they occur independent of one another. The mother who abuses her child is also likely to be neglecting that child's physical and emotional needs as well.

The results of the Apathy-Futility Scale and the Childish-Impulsivity Scale provide excellent clues as to the personality attributes of the child-abusing mother. The Apathy-Futility scale indicates that the abusive mother is a detached, behaviorally immobilized individual. This finding is supported by the clinical data of other researchers (Holter & Friedman, 1968; Kempe et al., 1962; Silver et. al., 1969) who have characterized abusive parents as rigid individuals with poor interpersonal relationships. The personality attribute of detachment is certainly relevant to the abuse of children. As these mothers become more detached from their children they become more and more insensitive to these children's needs. Thus it can be said that detachment can lead to insensitivity which itself can lead to child abuse.

The Childish-Impulsivity Scale, which was highly significant in discriminating among the three groups, reveals that abusive mothers tend to exhibit the personality traits of impulsivity and dependency. These characteristics have also been suggested by other researchers (Holter & Friedman, 1968;

Kempe et al., 1962; Silver et al., 1969).

As the combined personality traits of immobilization and impulsivity appear to be enigmatic, it is necessary to consider the dynamics of a person exhibiting both these characteristics. It appears that in the abusive mothers detachment and immobilization are used as defenses against impulsivity and dependency. Occasionally these defenses break down, and there is an explosive, impulsive outburst directed toward another person. Unfortunately, the recipient of this outburst is all too often the mother's child. Previous research on child abuse has suggested that one child may be singled out for the abuse (Boardman, 1962; Delsordo, 1963; Elmer, 1963; Kempe et al., 1962; Schloesser, 1964, Zalba, 1966). This study has suggested that the abusive mother exhibits a pervasive psychic immaturity. Whether her impulsive outbursts are directed toward one child or toward all of her children could be the question for further research which examines the interactional effects.

Finally, looking at the Education-Occupation Index, evidence can be found to support other researchers (Elmer, 1960, 1963; Gil, 1968a, 1968b, 1970; Holter & Friedman, 1968; Johnson & Morse, 1968; Merrill, 1962; Schloesser, 1964; Young, 1964) who have cited unemployment as one of the demographic characteristics of abusive parents. In addition to unemployment, lack of education would also be seen as a characteristic. However, as the majority of these researchers have noted, the link between child abuse and poverty is not that strong. All

the mothers in this sample came from a low socioeconomic group, yet the abusive mothers certainly showed significantly different characteristics from the other two groups of mothers. Thus it appears that educational level and employment experience are better demographic indices of child abuse than strict socioeconomic class membership.

The findings from this study appear to have important implications for professionals who work with mothers suspected of child abuse, especially if this work is preventive. If the mother in question has had a poor educational and employment record, if she provides poor physical and emotional care for her children, if she is detached from others and exhibits behavioral and emotional apathy, and if she tends to be impulsive and dependent, then there is the increased probability that she may or will abuse her children. Replication of this study is needed for further support of these characteristics which appear to be prevalent in the child-abusing mother. If replication does support the findings of this study, then these results could be used in professional intervention. This intervention, either in the form of therapy or job-training for the mother or the removal of the children from the home, may help prevent the tragedy of child abuse.

TABLE 1

MEAN SCORES OF GROUPS ON TESTING MEASURES

Group	Childhood Level of Living Scale	Maternal Characteristics Scale			Education- Occupation Index	TAT Conflict & Resolution Score
		Apathy- Futility Scale*	Childish- Impulsivity Scale*	Verbal Accessi- bility Scale*		
A (N=10)	46.1	22.9	14.0	14.8	1.3	16.1
B (N=10)	22.7	13.7	6.4	18.8	2.9	13.2
C (N=10)	21.2	12.9	5.1	18.2	3.2	12.1

*Mean of caseworkers and experimenter scores

Table 2

Simple Random Analysis of Variance
Childhood Level of Living Scale

Source	SS	df	ms	F	p
Total	13,358	29	-	-	-
Between Groups	3899	2	1949.5	5.564	<.01
Within Groups	9459	27	350.333	-	-

Table 3
Simple Random Analysis of Variance
Apathy-Futility Scale

Source	SS	df	ms	F	p
Total	2810.74	29	-	-	-
Between Groups	620.415	2	310.21	3.82	<.05
Within Groups	2190.32	27	81.12	-	-

Table 4
Simple Random Analysis of Variance
Childish-Impulsivity Scale

Source	SS	df	ms	F	p
Total	1004.75	29	-	-	-
Between Groups	464.32	2	232.16	11.60	<.001
Within Groups	540.34	27	20.01	-	-

Table 5
Simple Random Analysis of Variance
Verbal Accessibility Scale

Source	SS	df	ms	F	p
Total	1710.867	29	-	-	-
Between Groups	94.617	2	47.308	0.790	n.s.
Within Groups	1616.250	27	59.861	-	-

Table 6
Simple Random Analysis of Variance
Education-Occupation Index

Source	SS	df	ms	F	p
Total	71.47	29	-	-	-
Between Groups	20.87	2	10.435	5.56	<.01
Within Groups	50.60	27	1.874	-	-

Table 7
Simple Random Analysis of Variance
TAT Conflict Resolution Score

Source	SS	df	ms	F	p
Total	453	29	-	-	-
Between Groups	85.6	2	42.8	3.14	n.s.
Within Groups	367.4	27	13.6	-	-

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Appendix I

Maternal Characteristics Scale

The MCS consists of five subscales. These include 1) the behavioral immobilization scale, 2) the interpersonal detachment scale, 3) the impulsivity scale, 4) the dependency scale, and 5) the verbal accessibility scale. The first and second scales are summed to give the Apathy-Futility Scale. The third and fourth scales are summed to give the Childish-Impulsivity Scale. Higher scores on the Apathy-Futility Scale and the Childish-Impulsivity Scale indicate less evidence of psychological maturity and greater evidence of the traits which these scales measure. Higher scores on the Verbal Accessibility Scale indicate greater readiness to talk about one's most important attitudes and feelings and to engage in discussion of them with another person.

Whenever a plus mark (+) appears, it is counted as one point. A minus mark (-) is counted as minus one point. For each scale, the total score is the algebraic sum of plus and minus points. To facilitate statistical work, the final scores should be transformed so that all are zero or more. This can be done by adding a constant to each score. For further information on the MCS and its scoring procedures, the reader should consult the original source (Polansky et al., 1972).

Behavioral Immobilization Scale

	<u>Key to scoring</u>	
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
1. Claims that she is unable to perform at job or housework or get anything done.	<u>+</u>	---
2. Speaks of herself as healthy, strong and energetic.	<u>-</u>	---
3. Face is sometimes dirty, or makeup is smeared despite availability of washing facilities.	<u>+</u>	---
4. Hair is usually unkept, tangled or matted.	<u>+</u>	---
5. Clothes are usually dirty or in disarray.	<u>+</u>	---
6. Speech is full of long pauses.	<u>+</u>	---
7. Speaks in a faint voice <u>or</u> voice becomes weak and fades away at end of sentence.	<u>+</u>	---
8. Sometimes expresses hostility through physical aggression.	<u>-</u>	---
9. Answers questions with single words or by phrases only.	<u>+</u>	---
10. Has a sad expression <u>or</u> holds her body in a dejected or despondent posture.	<u>+</u>	---
11. Shows warmth in voice much of the time, with interviewer.	<u>-</u>	---
12. Shows enthusiasm.	<u>-</u>	---
13. When frustrated flies into rages.	<u>-</u>	---
14. When frustrated creates a turmoil.	<u>-</u>	---

15.	Visits with neighbors.	-	---
16.	Has at one time shown capacity to hold a job.	-	---
17.	Manages the family finances.	-	---
18.	Keeps virtually the same posture throughout the interview.	+	---
19.	Keeps eyes closed or averted.	+	---
20.	Has decorated house in some unexpected way.	-	---

Interpersonal Detachment Scale

		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
1.	Day dreams much of the time; gets out of touch with current daily happenings.	+	---
2.	Face is sometimes dirty, or makeup is smeared, despite availability of washing facilities.	+	---
3.	Hair is usually unkept, tangled or matted.	+	---
4.	Clothes are usually dirty or in disarray.	+	---
5.	Clothing is appropriate to season (weather).	-	---
6.	Clothing is usually appropriate to occasion.	-	---
7.	From time to time, becomes preoccupied <u>or</u> shows lapses of attention at end of sentences.	+	---
8.	Speaks in a faint voice <u>or</u> voice becomes weak and fades away at end of sentences.	+	---
9.	Talks comfortably with the interviewer by the second contact.	-	---
10.	In discussing children, very frequently adverts to self.	+	---
11.	Talks in ambiguous, obscure, vague or cryptic manner.	+	---
12.	Shows warmth in tone in discussing her children.	-	---
13.	Shows warmth in tone in talking with her children.	-	---
14.	Evidences fearfulness or shyness about meeting new people, or strange social situation.	+	---
15.	Seems incurious about the inner feelings of others.	+	---
16.	Discusses her children freely.	-	---
17.	Individualizes her children noticeably.	-	---
18.	Discusses her children's behavior, as if "from the outside."	+	---
19.	Belongs to PTA.	-	---
20.	Belongs to other community group.	-	---
21.	Belongs to church.	-	---
22.	Visits with neighbors.	-	---
23.	Keeps eyes closed or averted.	+	---
24.	Shows interest in and knowledge of the larger world scene.	-	---

Impulsivity Scale

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
1. Lacks persistence in pursuit of goals.	<u>+</u>	---
2. Plans realistically for self, children, family.	-	---
3. Follows through on plans which have been made for self, children, family.	-	---
4. Shouts, yells or screams frequently at something or somebody in interviewer's presence.	<u>+</u>	---
5. Sometimes expresses hostility through physical aggression.	<u>+</u>	---
6. Sometimes expresses warmth in exaggerated form.	<u>+</u>	---
7. Evidences gullibility.	<u>+</u>	---
8. Has shown defiance toward authorities in deed or word.	<u>+</u>	---
9. When frustrated flies into rages.	<u>+</u>	---
10. When frustrated creates a turmoil.	<u>+</u>	---
11. Shows tolerance of routine.	-	---
12. Sets and maintains control on her own behavior.	---	<u>+</u>
13. Has engaged in behavior not acceptable to her community.	<u>+</u>	---
14. Accumulates savings.	-	---
15. Shows belligerence toward interviewer from time to time.	<u>+</u>	---

Dependency Scale

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
1. Has definite realistic goals - for herself, children, family.	-	---
2. Whines when she talks.	<u>+</u>	---
3. Dwells on her problems with her children.	<u>+</u>	---
4. Evidences gullibility.	<u>+</u>	---
5. Takes pleasure in things she and children do together.	<u>+</u>	---
6. Clings to her children.	<u>+</u>	---
7. Can make decisions and accept responsibility for them.	-	---
8. Has at one time shown capacity to hold a job.	-	---
9. Complains of feeling neglected by parents.	<u>+</u>	---
10. Seems to treat all other adults as if they were parents.	<u>+</u>	---
11. Frequently refers to the opinions of, or quotes, her mother.	<u>+</u>	---
12. Frequently refers to the opinions of, or quotes, her father.	<u>+</u>	---
13. Keeps insisting that interviewer give advice or intervene on her behalf.	<u>+</u>	---

Verbal Accessibility Scale

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
1. Evidences (some verbalization) negative or discouraged attitude toward her future accomplishments or attainments.	<u>+</u>	---
2. Mentions she is aimless or getting nowhere.	<u>+</u>	---
3. Says she enjoys living.	<u>+</u>	---
4. Evidences excessive concern with religion or expresses some highly unusual religious ideas.	<u>+</u>	---
5. Claims she is unable to perform at job or housework or get anything done.	<u>+</u>	---
6. Speaks of herself as healthy, strong, and energetic.	<u>+</u>	---
7. It is hard for her to consider a new way of looking at the same thing.	<u>-</u>	---
8. From time to time, becomes preoccupied or shows lapses of attention at end of sentences.	---	<u>+</u>
9. Speech is full of long pauses.	<u>-</u>	---
10. Speaks in a faint voice or voice becomes weak and fades away at end of sentences.	<u>-</u>	---
11. Talks comfortably with the interviewer by the second contact.	<u>+</u>	---
12. Usually states opinions reasonably directly.	<u>+</u>	---
13. Talks in ambiguous, obscure, vague or cryptic manner.	<u>-</u>	<u>+</u>
14. Whines when she talks.	<u>-</u>	---
15. Feels free to verbalize regarding hurts received.	<u>+</u>	<u>-</u>
16. Expresses ideas of revenge and wishes to retaliate.	<u>+</u>	---
17. Evidences a sense of humor.	<u>+</u>	---
18. Verbalizes embarrassment.	<u>+</u>	---
19. Verbalizes shame.	<u>+</u>	---
20. Verbalizes guilt.	<u>+</u>	---
21. Enjoys talking about herself.	<u>+</u>	---
22. Answers questions with single words or by phrases only.	<u>-</u>	---
23. Talks of her situation with practically no outward sign of emotion.	<u>-</u>	---
24. Shows warmth in voice much of the time, with interviewer.	<u>+</u>	---
25. Shows warmth in tone in discussing her children.	<u>+</u>	---
26. Shows warmth in tone in talking with her children.	<u>+</u>	---
27. Can laugh at herself.	<u>+</u>	---
28. Expresses boredom with her life.	<u>+</u>	---
29. Discusses her children freely.	<u>+</u>	---

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
30. Individualizes her children noticeably.	<u>+</u>	---
31. Discusses her children's behavior, as if "from the outside."	<u>-</u>	---
32. Discusses her children's assets.	<u>+</u>	---
33. Discusses her children's liabilities.	<u>+</u>	---
34. Complains of feeling neglected by parents.	<u>+</u>	---
35. Keeps eyes closed or averted.	<u>-</u>	---
36. Expresses objection to interview or resentment at having to answer questions.	<u>-</u>	---
37. Manner of response <u>or</u> failure to respond makes it uncertain whether or not many items are true (e.g. subject incoherent, evasive, suggestible).	<u>-</u>	---
38. Expresses awareness of complexities in other's decisions - that they have had to weigh alternatives.	<u>+</u>	---
39. Frequently, and appropriately, expresses herself in abstractions.	<u>+</u>	---
40. Uses figures of speech colorfully or amusingly.	<u>+</u>	---

Appendix II

Childhood Level of Living Scale

This scale is scored so that a high score indicates a low level of living. Whenever a plus mark (+) appears, it is counted as one point. The final score is the sum of the plus marks. For further information on the CLLS, the reader should consult the original source (Polansky et al., 1972).

		Key to scoring	
		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Part A - Physical Care			
Comfort			
1.	Water is piped into the house.	---	<u>+</u>
2.	Hot water is piped to a faucet.	---	<u>+</u>
3.	Light bulbs are from naked dropcords.	<u>+</u>	---
4.	The mother complains of difficulty in heating the house.	<u>+</u>	---
5.	One potbellied stove is only means of heating house other than cook stove.	<u>+</u>	---
6.	The house is heated by coal or oil.	---	<u>+</u>
7.	The family lives mostly in one room in winter because of difficulty in heating entire house.	<u>+</u>	---
Safety			
8.	There are at least two exits to the house.	---	<u>+</u>
9.	The exits are easily opened.	---	<u>+</u>
10.	Electrical wiring appears to be frayed or overloaded.	<u>+</u>	---
11.	Stovepipes go directly to chimney or flue.	---	<u>+</u>
12.	Fires are sometimes started with kerosene or other flammable agent.	<u>+</u>	---
State of Repair			
13.	Repairs one usually makes oneself are left undone.	<u>+</u>	---
14.	The roof of the house leaks.	<u>+</u>	---
15.	Windows have been cracked or broken over a month without repair.	<u>+</u>	---
16.	House is dilapidated.	<u>+</u>	---
17.	House is neither papered nor painted inside.	<u>+</u>	---
Hygenic Conditions			
18.	There is an inside toilet.	---	<u>+</u>
19.	There is an outside toilet.	<u>+</u>	---
20.	There are window screens in good repair in most windows.	---	<u>+</u>
21.	There are screen doors properly mounted.	---	<u>+</u>

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Feeding Patterns		
22. Child frequently arrives at day-care center (school) without breakfast and complains of being hungry.	<u>+</u>	<u>—</u>
23. Mother plans for variety in foods.	<u>—</u>	<u>+</u>
24. Mother plans at least one meal a day consisting of two courses.	<u>—</u>	<u>+</u>
25. Mother plans meals with courses that go together.	<u>—</u>	<u>+</u>
26. Mother plans special meals for special occasions.	<u>—</u>	<u>+</u>
27. Child is offered food at fixed time each day.	<u>—</u>	<u>+</u>
28. Mother expresses concern about feeding child balanced diet.	<u>—</u>	<u>+</u>
29. Mother makes effort to get child to eat foods not preferred because they are important to child's nutrition.	<u>—</u>	<u>+</u>
30. Child has more than one soft drink per day.	<u>+</u>	<u>—</u>
Safety Precautions		
31. Child is taught to swim or mother believes child should be taught to swim.	<u>—</u>	<u>+</u>
32. Child is never allowed to go to a body of water unattended.	<u>—</u>	<u>+</u>
33. Mother takes precautions in the storage of medicine.	<u>—</u>	<u>+</u>
34. Poisonous or dangerous sprays and cleaning fluids are stored out of child's reach.	<u>—</u>	<u>+</u>
35. Mother teaches child about danger of poisonous plants and berries in woods.	<u>—</u>	<u>+</u>
36. Mother enforces rules about going into the streets or roads.	<u>—</u>	<u>+</u>
37. Mother has instructed child about crossing streets or roads.	<u>—</u>	<u>+</u>
38. Mother will never leave child alone in the house.	<u>—</u>	<u>+</u>
39. Mother sometimes leaves child to insufficiently older sibling.	<u>+</u>	<u>—</u>
Use of Medical Facilities		
40. Mother has evidenced lack of awareness of child's possible dental needs.	<u>+</u>	<u>—</u>
41. There has been neglect of obvious medical needs.	<u>+</u>	<u>—</u>
42. Mother has taken child for shots and immunizations on own initiative.	<u>—</u>	<u>+</u>
43. Child is taken to medical doctor or clinic after accident.	<u>—</u>	<u>+</u>
44. Medical care is readily sought if child is ill.	<u>—</u>	<u>+</u>
45. Family uses other than doctors or nurses in case of accident or illness.	<u>+</u>	<u>—</u>

Clothing	Yes	No
46. Child has both play clothes and good clothes.	—	+
47. Clothing usually appears to be hand-me-downs.	+	—
48. Buttons and snaps of child's clothing are frequently missing and are not replaced.	+	—
49. Shoes are in reasonably good repair.	—	+
50. Child is usually dressed appropriately for weather conditions.	—	+
51. Child is usually dressed appropriately for activity.	—	+
52. Clothing is clean when child goes to school or day-care center.	—	+
53. Evidence that underwear is changed as needed.	—	+
54. Items requiring ironing have been ironed.	—	+
55. Child sleeps in pajamas or gown.	—	+

Grooming	Yes	No
56. There is routine washing of the child before going to bed.	—	+
57. It is obvious that mother has given attention to child's grooming at home.	—	+
58. Ears are usually clean.	—	+
59. Fingernails are clean.	—	+
60. Head and hair are clean.	—	+
61. Hair is combed.	—	+
62. Hair is cut.	—	+
63. There is a bathtub or washtub for immersed bathing in home.	—	+
64. The child is immersed weekly; never.	+	—
65. Toilet tissue is usually available.	—	+
66. Each family member has a toothbrush.	—	+

Home Comforts	Yes	No
67. There is an operating electric washing machine available.	—	+
68. Mother complains of inadequate covering for warmth.	+	—
69. Mattresses are in obviously poor condition.	+	—
70. Living room doubles as a bedroom.	+	—
71. Furniture is obviously in need of repair.	+	—
72. Home has a telephone.	—	+
73. Family own a car which runs.	—	+
74. Family owns a freezer.	—	+
75. Family owns a sewing machine.	—	+
76. There is an operating electric sweeper.	—	+

Part B - Emotional/Cognitive Care

Promoting Curiosity	Yes	No
77. Family has been to a town outside the county.	—	+
78. Planned vacation trip has been taken by the family.	—	+

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
79. Child has been taken by parents to see different animals.	---	<u>+</u>
80. Child has been taken by parents to see a county fair.	---	<u>+</u>
81. Child has been taken by parents to a carnival.	---	<u>+</u>
82. Child has been taken by parents to watch construction.	---	<u>+</u>
83. Child has been taken by parents to see some well-known natural attraction.	---	<u>+</u>
84. Mother mentions child asks questions showing curiosity about how things work.	---	<u>+</u>
85. Mother mentions that she answers child's questions about how things work.	---	<u>+</u>
Level of Disciplinary Techniques		
86. Discipline usually takes the form of:		
Spanking with a switch	<u>+</u>	---
Very frequently no action is taken	<u>+</u>	---
87. Child is sometimes rewarded for good behavior.	---	<u>+</u>
88. Mother expresses feeling that child should cooperate without reward.	<u>+</u>	---
89. Mother threatens punishment by imagined or real fright object.	<u>+</u>	---

Appendix III

Education-Occupation Index

This score measures a person's educational and occupational achievements. In the area of education, two points are given for a tenth grade or better education, one point for completing the eighth or ninth grade, and zero points for completion of the seventh grade or less.

For the occupation score, being employed for one full year or more at the same job receives a score of two points. One point is given for being employed at several jobs over a year or for sporadic employment over several years. No points are given if the individual's employment record does not fit either of the above requirements.

The final Education-Occupation Index Score is the sum of the education score and the occupation score. For further information on this index, the reader is referred to the original source (Polansky et al., 1972).

