



BY CHARLES ANZALONE

# Behavioral Skills Better Than Pills

Meta-analysis looks at how best to treat children with ADHD

BEHAVIOR TREATMENT WORKS AS WELL AS DRUGS for children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and bypasses the risk of medications' side effects. This finding is the result of a meta-analysis of 174 studies on ADHD treatment that was published by UB researchers in the March 2009 issue of *Clinical Psychology Review*.

**T**HE REVIEW FOUND THAT TEACHING parents and teachers how to respond when children do things the right way—as well as when they display harmful or aggressive behavior—is effective, and in some cases more effective, than medication for ADHD.

“This review shows that behavioral treatments work, and in general work well,” says Gregory A. Fabiano, PhD, assistant professor in the Department of Counseling, School and Educational Psychology in UB’s Graduate School of Education, and first author on the paper.

“For the past couple of decades, there has been considerable professional controversy about the role and adequacy of behavior modification treatments in the care of children with ADHD. The next step is to figure out how to make them work for individual families over the long run, because we now know that ADHD is a lifelong condition.”

William Pelham Jr, PhD, UB Distinguished Professor of Psychology, Pediatrics and Psychiatry, is coauthor on the study.

Through use of behavior modification, children could bypass the risk of side effects from ADHD drugs and achieve the same or better results as drug treatments, Fabiano notes.

Fabiano explains that ADHD is one of the most common mental-health disorders among children. “Prevalence rates place at least one child with ADHD in every classroom in America, highlighting the need for effective interventions.

“Our results suggest that efforts should be redirected from debating the effectiveness of behavioral interventions to dissemination, enhancing and improving the use of these programs in community, school and mental-health settings.”

In the future, Fabiano plans to work with teachers, parents, pediatricians and clinicians in the community to emphasize the effectiveness of behavior-modification treatments.

His additional research includes developing strategies to get fathers more involved in the treatment of children with ADHD, and the use of driving simulators to help teens with ADHD learn to drive, while also helping parents learn to provide effective driving instruction to their teens.

Fabiano is a recent recipient of the White House’s Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers, the nation’s highest honor for professionals at the early stages of their independent scientific research careers. **BP**

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— GREGORY FABIANO, PHD



BY LOIS BAKER

# Children Faced with Danger

Dog bites to the head and neck linked to warmer temperatures

**I**F YOU AND YOUR CHILD ARE romping in the park or enjoying a stroll on a warm spring day and a dog approaches, be ultra vigilant.

Children, warm weather and dogs, even family dogs, don’t mix well, according to a study conducted by pediatric otolaryngologists in the School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences.

Results show that young children are especially vulnerable to severe dog bites in the head and neck areas, and that there is a correlation between cases of dog bites and rising temperatures.

“A dog is man’s best friend, but could be a child’s worst companion,” notes Philomena M. Behar, MD, UB clinical assistant professor of otolaryngology and the study’s corresponding author.

“Children are particularly vulnerable to severe dog bite injuries on the head and neck, and the injuries can be extensive and a risk to life, especially in young children,” she says. “Youngsters don’t understand the need to distance themselves from danger. They may even look like prey [to a dog], especially as they run around, and children usually can’t outrun the dog or defend themselves.”

For the study, which was published in the March 2009 issue of *Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery*, the authors reviewed charts of the 84 children up to 19 years old who were treated for dog bites at Women and Children’s Hospital in Buffalo from 1999 to 2007.

Results show that the average age of injured children was six years. One-third of the bites occurred on the cheeks, 21 percent on the lips, and eight percent each on the nose and ears, results showed.

Sixty-four percent of the patients suffered more than one facial wound, and 40 percent of the total injuries had to be repaired in the operating room under general anesthesia.

Dog bites increased as the weather warmed, the researchers found, and a family pet was the culprit in 27 percent of the injuries.

Pit bull terriers were the breed most commonly reported or identified as the attacker, because of their notoriety. However, Behar notes that the breed of dog often was not known or was not recorded.

“Doctors, nurses and others involved in treating the injuries need to be educated to collect precise information,” she emphasizes. “It’s very useful to know the specifics: Was the dog provoked and was the child supervised adequately?”

Health-care providers should collect as much information as possible, including breed and sex of the dog, spay or neuter status, history of aggression, ownership and owner’s use of restraint, time of the incident, the child’s past history of dog bites, location of the incident, and the dog’s vaccination history.

“This information is important to be able to identify trends and develop and promote prevention strategies,” says Behar.

Angelo Monroy, MD, of the UB Department of Otolaryngology, is first author on the study. Additional authors, all UB otolaryngologists affiliated with Women and Children’s Hospital, include Mark Nagy, MD (also a member of the UB Department of Pediatrics), Christopher Poje, MD, and Michael Pizzuto, MD. Linda Brodsky, MD, also contributed to the study. **BP**

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