Best Practices: Munchausen by Proxy, Abuse by Pediatric Condition Falsification, and Factitious Disorder Imposed on Another
SPPAC 2019 Preconference Workshop (2.5 CEs)

Overall summary and relevance to conference theme:
Munchausen by proxy (MBP) is a term that is often used to describe situations in which an individual with Factitious Disorder Imposed on Another (FDIA) (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition, DSM-5) engages in falsifying a condition or illness in another for psychological gratification. Any medical condition can be created, falsified or exaggerated. Falsified conditions may also be developmental, behavioral or educational.

Therapists and school personnel, who often see youth more frequently than they are seen by pediatricians, may be in the best position to play a role in early identification of MBP. Psychologists may conduct medical record analysis to identify patterns of falsification behaviors by the suspected abuser. Psychologists may also provide therapy to victims or abusers and their other family members, or encounter this form of abuse and neglect during forensic activities.

Mental health professionals are as vulnerable as any other professional to being misled by a factitious disordered individual, so it is important that evaluators have expertise on this topic and have access to consultants who can guide them. Clinical interviews and psychological testing cannot be used as evidence that abuse/neglect did not occur. In fact, as in all forms of child abuse and neglect, an abuser may appear completely normal upon testing or interview. Case management of MBP cases and treatment of perpetrating and targeted family members can be extremely challenging due to the severe and insidious nature of FDIA.

The American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC) recently published the first national guidelines on best practices related to the identification, reporting, assessment, and management of MBP. The DSM-5 includes updates to the associated psychiatric diagnosis of FDIA. Using the new APSAC guidelines as a framework, the purpose of this pre-conference workshop is to provide an update on FDIA and to teach pediatric psychologists and others to identify patients at high risk for MBP, to assist pediatricians in assessing for possible MBP, to create a helpful report for child abuse authorities, and to engage in effective treatment planning for victims and abusers.

Based on the content of this talk, participants will be able to:
1. Identify the warning signs of exaggerated, fabricated, or induced conditions in children
2. List the methods by which conditions are falsified and the harm experienced by victims
3. Explain evaluation, clinical feedback and reporting strategies
4. Discuss potentially helpful management and treatment approaches

Target Learner Level: Beginner to Intermediate
Registration cap: No limit

Presenters: Brenda Bursch, PhD

Dr. Bursch is a Professor in the Department of Psychiatry & Biobehavioral Sciences and in the Department of Pediatrics at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, where she has been on faculty since 1994. She serves as the Clinical Director of the Pediatric Psychiatry Consultation Liaison service, overseeing child psychiatry consultations for pediatric medical inpatients in Mattel Children’s Hospital. Dr. Bursch has regularly served as an expert evaluator on the topic of Munchausen by proxy for child protective services within the western United States, provided therapy to victims and perpetrators, and contributed to the professional literature with
workshops, papers and chapters. Influencing practice at a national and international level, Dr. Bursch served as an invited advisor for the American Psychiatric Association DSM-5 Work Group on Somatic Symptom Disorders, including Factitious Disorders, and has been a member of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC) Munchausen by proxy taskforce for over 20 years. Recently, this taskforce published the first practice guidelines on this topic, which is expected to be adapted and adopted by the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect in the near future.

**COI Statement:** None to disclose.

**Session Date/Time:** Thursday, April 4th, 2019; 8:00-10:30 AM

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