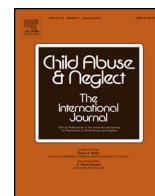




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## Child Abuse &amp; Neglect



Research article

## Abusive head trauma in Spanish language medical literature

M. Townsend Cooper Jr.<sup>a,\*</sup>, Edgardo Szyld<sup>b</sup>, Paul M. Darden<sup>a</sup><sup>a</sup> The University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, Department of Pediatrics, General and Community Pediatrics, 1200 Children's Ave, Suite 12400, Oklahoma City, OK 73104, USA<sup>b</sup> The University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, Department of Pediatrics, Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine, 1200 Everett Drive, ETNP7504, Oklahoma City, OK 73104, USA

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## ABSTRACT

Anecdotal experiences raise concerns that abusive head trauma (AHT) is significantly underdiagnosed and perhaps poorly recognized in Latin American settings. With increasing interest in international collaboration in pediatrics, differences in perspectives regarding complex diagnoses should be explored to facilitate a productive exchange of knowledge and ideas. The purpose of this study was to describe the medical literature pertaining to AHT available to physicians who read only in Spanish. In this review, LILACS, SciELO (major Spanish language databases) and Pubmed were searched with appropriate terms and filters in English, Spanish, and Portuguese for Spanish language articles on AHT. Identified articles' reference lists were then examined for possible additional articles on AHT. All relevant articles were sorted by country and examined for article type and content. Thirty-four unique articles were located for review from 8 of 21 countries. Most of the articles identified were case reports, case series, or educational, and there were no studies regarding overall incidence or prevalence of AHT. Some scientific information contained in the articles varied considerably from that in the English language literature in the areas of etiology and preventive strategies. This survey highlights that the Spanish language literature regarding AHT is sparse and variable. This must be considered when working collaboratively in a global setting. Additionally, identification of this gap presents an opportunity for education and information exchange among global medical communities.

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## 1. Introduction

Abusive head trauma (AHT) is characterized by a constellation of findings including subdural hematoma, retinal hemorrhages, and diffuse brain injury which is indicative of non-accidental trauma (Duhaim, Christian, Rorke, & Zimmerman, 1998). AHT has been found in studies in the United States to be the most common cause of fatal head injury in children under two years of age (Gill et al., 2009). Important milestones in the evolution of the diagnosis include the article by Caffey in 1946 describing the association of long bone fractures and subdural hematomas (Caffey, 1946), the 1971 article by Guthkelch linking subdural hematoma to shaking (Guthkelch, 1971), and the 1974 article by Caffey adding a description of associated retinal hemorrhages (Caffey, 1974). Since that time there have been numerous studies on mechanisms, incidence, and prevention of abusive head trauma in infants (Hymel & Deye, 2011).

\* Corresponding author. Tel.: +1 405 271 4407; fax: +1 405 271 8709.

E-mail addresses: michael-t-cooper@ouhsc.edu (M.T. Cooper Jr.), eszyld@gmail.com (E. Szyld), paul-darden@ouhsc.edu (P.M. Darden).

Previously known as “shaken baby syndrome”, recent recommendations call for use of the term “abusive head trauma” (AHT). This is due to ongoing discussion regarding the exact mechanism of injury in these cases, whether shaking alone or a combination of shaking and impact are responsible for the injuries. Because of the variable nature of injury mechanisms, the more inclusive term of abusive head trauma is considered more correct ([Christian CW Block R Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect American Academy of Pediatrics, 2009](#); [Duhaime et al., 1998](#)). Studies estimate that incidence of AHT in the United States is between 27.5 and 32.2 cases per 100,000 infants <1 year annually ([Ellingson, Leventhal, & Weiss, 2008](#); [Keenan et al., 2003](#)).

The composition of the literature regarding AHT varies outside of the United States. Some countries, such as Australia and the United Kingdom, have extensive literature regarding incidence of abusive head trauma. However, even in large countries, there can be a paucity of literature. One such example is Brazil, which as of 2013 did not have any peer reviewed articles detailing annual incidence of abusive head trauma ([Lopes, Eisenstein, & Williams, 2013](#)). Articles regarding incidence and prevalence can orient physicians on the need to be alert for a diagnosis. They are also an indicator that the medical community in a particular country is recognizing a diagnosis with sufficient frequency to generate such data.

Recently, there has been increased interest among young physicians in becoming educated on Global Health issues, as well as an increasing focus on Global Health in pediatric residency programs ([Garfunkel & Howard, 2011](#)). Research has demonstrated wide variation in challenges in the management of abusive head trauma depending on country in countries as diverse as the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, and Sweden ([Frasier, Kelly, Al-Eissa, & Otterman, 2014](#)). When working abroad, it is important to be aware of the potential differences in perspective and training of international colleagues for optimal collaboration, information exchange, and patient care. Most of the widely cited landmark studies on abusive head trauma (listed above) are in English and originated from the United States or the United Kingdom ([Caffey, 1946, 1974](#); [Duhaime et al., 1998](#); [Guthkelch, 1971](#)), and there is a continued lively, in depth discussion of the topic in the English language medical literature. English language Pubmed search using the terms “abusive head trauma” and “shaken baby syndrome” yields 889 unique articles, the first published in 1984. Although in Spanish speaking countries the majority of academic physicians read English well, in our experience working outside of the academic sphere in Latin America this is often not the case. For the monolingual Spanish speaking colleague with whom we might collaborate, questions arise: What is the literature landscape on which they are basing their conclusions and treatment decisions? How different might their perspective be based on what is available only in the Spanish language literature?

The aim of this survey is to characterize the medical literature available from the perspective of physicians who read only Spanish regarding the diagnosis of abusive head trauma in infants.

## 2. Methods

The Spanish language medical literature was searched for articles relating to the subject of abusive head trauma or shaken baby syndrome (all dates included). The databases LILACS, SciELO, and Pubmed (Spanish and Portuguese filters) were searched with the following terms: shaken baby, abusive head trauma, Niño sacudido, bebé sacudido, traumatismo craneoencefálico por maltrato, traumatismo craneo abusivo, trauma craneo violento, bebé sacudido (overlapping terms in English, Spanish, and Portuguese). Although in English the currently recognized term to include all such injuries is abusive head trauma, it is not clear that there is an officially recognized equivalent in Spanish. For this reason, variations on the terms abusive head trauma, “shaken baby” and their translations were included to ensure that the search was inclusive. Additionally, after extensive article review, it was noted that the term “zarandeado” (English: “buffeted”) was used in place of “sacudido” (English: “shaken”) in many of the articles. Accordingly, the above databases were searched for this term without any additional unique yield. We eliminated duplicate results and eliminated articles that were not published in the Spanish language (the searches also yielded articles in English and Portuguese). References in each article were also examined for relevant Spanish language publications. Each article identified by either the primary (database) search or secondary (reference) search was reviewed in detail. If the article did not contain a significant discussion of non-accidental head trauma in infants, the article was excluded from review. The depth of the treatment of the subject was noted along with number of cases if appropriate, and the article was classified by country of publication or origin as appropriate.

## 3. Results

There were 89 articles identified in the original database search. 48 articles were duplicates, leaving 41 unique articles. Ten articles were removed due to non-Spanish publication. Of the remaining articles, 4 did not have any pertinent information or were unavailable despite librarian search, leaving 27 relevant articles. Eleven additional unique relevant articles were identified through examining the references of those articles of which 7 could be accessed, for a total of 34 articles detailed below. See [Fig. 1](#) for flowchart. See [Table 1](#) for article/country/population details.

There were no articles estimating prevalence of AHT in the Spanish language literature. Most of the papers located were reviews or personal practice papers, which normally would be excluded from a systematic review searching for effect sizes of a parameter. However, because the express purpose of our search was to determine what resources monolingual Spanish readers would find when searching for information on the topic, we included them in the results to construct a more complete picture of available literature.

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