



Decision Making in Care and Protection: The Expert Assessment

Dr C. Lennings

ABSTRACT

The assessment of abuse in child and protection matters is a matter of great concern in forensic assessments. Apart from the fact that expert reports carry weight in such circumstances, there is still not a clear consensus about what variables should be assessed, or how, and what weight should be given to them. The outcomes of such assessments are not known, and as such, professionals get little feedback about what works, and does not. There are few follow up studies, and none of the kind found in other areas of forensic psychology assessing risk of recidivism in sex or violent offenders, or general criminal recidivism. Despite the complexity of child abuse assessments, it appears necessary to explore the issues and assessment strategies that psychologists and other experts use to promote both the effectiveness of reports, and their accuracy.