

Treating Traumatized Children

Clinical Implications of the Psychobiology Of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

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There is growing evidence that child maltreatment and posttraumatic stress disorder result in numerous neurobiological alterations in children and adolescents, including abnormalities in brain structure and functioning. This article reviews several psychobiological systems with regard to their functioning under normal stress and in the presence of posttraumatic stress disorder, with a focus on recent research findings in children and adolescents, and the implications these findings have on clinical intervention for traumatized children. The importance of early identification and treatment of traumatized children and the need to empirically evaluate psychopharmacological interventions for childhood posttraumatic stress disorder are discussed in detail. Research and policy priorities are also addressed.