

Survey finds 'staggeringly high rate of spanking' in North Carolina

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A new survey finds that 30 percent of North Carolina mothers of children less than two years old say they have spanked their children in the last year.

In addition, 5 percent of North Carolina mothers of three-month-old [babies](#) say they have spanked their very young children. More than 70 percent of mothers of 23-month-old children say they have done so, too.

"We were pretty surprised by the staggeringly high rate of spanking," said Adam Zolotor, MD, MPH, lead author of the study, an assistant professor in the Department of Family Medicine in the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine and a core faculty member of the UNC Injury Prevention Research Center. "We need to do a better job as a society teaching parents how to teach their kids what they need to learn without fear, pain, or coercion."

The study was published June 24, 2011 by *Frontiers in Child and Neurodevelopmental Psychiatry*, an open-access online journal.

In the study, a total of 2,946 [mothers](#) of children born in North Carolina between Oct. 1, 2005 and July 31, 2007 completed the anonymous telephone survey. The survey was conducted from Oct. 1, 2007 to April 7, 2008, at UNC's Survey Research Unit.

"The very young [children](#) that are the focus of this study are not developmentally sophisticated enough for willful misbehavior," Zolotor said. "Family physicians, pediatricians, and parent educators must start much earlier at helping parents understand child behavior and develop discipline strategies.

"The cost to society is huge," Zolotor said. "We know that [spanking](#) has been associated with child abuse victimization, poor self-esteem, impaired

parent-child relationships, and child and adult mental health, substance abuse, and behavioral consequences."

More information:

www.frontiersin.org/child_and_neurodevelopmental_psychiatry/2011.00036/abstract

Provided by University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine

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