Pediatricians say no to spanking

June 18 2018

(HealthDay)—Most U.S. pediatricians say spanking is a bad way to discipline children.

"In the past couple of decades, a tremendous amount of research has come out that shows hitting children is counterproductive and leads to more harm than good," said Catherine Taylor, author of a new survey on the subject.

"I hope that pediatricians will recognize that not only can they speak up about this issue with parents and with each other, but that they have the support of their colleagues," said Taylor, an associate professor of global community health and behavioral sciences at Tulane University in New Orleans.

She and her colleagues sent a questionnaire to 1,500 pediatricians nationwide, most of whom had more than 15 years of practice.

The survey revealed that 74 percent of respondents did not approve of spanking, and 78 percent said spanking never or rarely leads to better behavior.

But while most pediatricians oppose spanking, research shows that three-quarters of men and two-thirds of women in the United States still believe spanking is useful.

"Pediatricians are among the most trusted sources of credible advice that parents go to. If pediatricians feel empowered more to speak up about this issue and talk to parents about it, we could start to see parents' attitudes and behaviors shifting as well," Taylor said in a university news release.

The study was published June 11 in the *Journal of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics*.

More information: The American Academy of Pediatrics has more on child discipline.

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Citation: Pediatricians say no to spanking (2018, June 18) retrieved 6 May 2023 from https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-06-pediatricians-spanking.html

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