



Pediatrician John Leventhal is a specialist in child abuse who has assembled a team that treats the multiple issues his patients face.

Physician at Work

A Career Spent Preventing Child Abuse

John M. Leventhal, MD, spends his time on the kinds of cases every physician dreads. As a child abuse specialist, Leventhal consults at Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital when there is a suspicion of physical abuse, neglect or sexual abuse involving children.

"There are injuries that make people very worried about physical abuse," Leventhal explained. These include any serious injury to a child less than a year old, or head trauma such as a fractured skull or subdural hemorrhage, for which there is not a plausible explanation. Leventhal meets with the family, examines the child, reviews X-rays, checks lab data, meets with the physicians, and if necessary, reports the case to the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

Not surprisingly, Leventhal's work requires delicacy and compassion, and he has assembled a team to handle the medical, psychological and social issues faced by his patients. Specially trained social workers conduct forensic interviews to obtain information regarding sexual abuse allegations; the interviews take place in a room with a one-way mirror, so that representatives from the police department and the DCF can observe. Specialists trained in child development help prepare children for their interviews and medical exam, sometimes accompanying them into the exam room to help distract them, especially when sexual abuse is suspected. A family advocate is also available to link the family to the appropriate mental health services in the community. "It's a team approach," said Leventhal, who arrived at Yale as an intern in 1973, took over direction of DART, Detection, Assessment, Referral and Treatment, one of the
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Clinician Deborah Proctor and Sharon Anderson, the clinical practice manager, enjoy their new surroundings at 40 Temple Street. They say patients are much happier with the location, which has better parking and convenient labs and facilities for some procedures.

Digestive Diseases Savors a New Home

Move to Temple Medical Center focuses on patient satisfaction.

Early in January a patient told **Deborah Proctor, MD**, professor of medicine, how pleased he was with the Section of Digestive Diseases' new offices on the first floor of 40 Temple Street. "My patient said, 'It's easy to get here. The parking is half as expensive,'" she said. With two labs in the building, she added, it only takes five minutes to get a blood sample. Procedures such as endoscopy and colonoscopy can also be done in the same building.

The section relocated this month, after decades of practicing in the Dana Clinic Building and elsewhere. It joins Ophthalmology, the Child Study Center, GI Surgery, Dermatologic Surgery and Neurology in the Temple Medical Center, which has become, on clinical volume alone, the main ambulatory facility of YMG. Although originally concerned about the distance from Cedar Street, faculty now recognize the advantages of their new clinical home. Before the move, the section was scattered among different buildings at the medical center. Proctor, for example, saw patients at the Yale Physicians Building on Howard Avenue, had her academic offices in LMP and went to the Hunter Building to do procedures. "The clinical practice here is all bundled into one," she said.

Since the new clinical suite—eight exam rooms, 10 offices for doctors and research fellows and two swing offices—opened on January 3, about 400 patients have walked through its doors. In addition to the "one-stop shopping" aspect, the new site offers another advantage. At YPB, the section shared nursing staff, administrative staff and exam rooms

with other sections and departments. On Temple Street the staff works exclusively for the digestive diseases section. "It makes it easier for them to get their work done, when they have the support of the medical assistants and the administrative staff at their fingertips," practice manager **Sharon Anderson** said of the clinic's physicians.

"There really was no coherent practice space," said **Michael Nathanson, MD, PhD**, the section's chief. "Now we have our own staff there. There is a sense that we can run the practice in the way that we want and in the way that our patients should expect."

The move comes after years of growth for the section, and further expansion is anticipated. During the past five years, Nathanson said, the section has added 10 new faculty, bringing the total to 30, and clinical revenues have increased by 50 percent. Administrative support staff has also doubled, from seven to 15. The section is seeking to add two specialists in inflammatory bowel disease, plus a specialist in motility.

"Our goal," Nathanson said, "is to expand the practice in such a way that we will be able to offer areas of expertise and excellence in gastroenterology that one might not be able to get otherwise."

Section of Digestive Diseases
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203-785-4138

Physician at Work *continued*

first hospital-based child abuse programs in the country, in 1982, and established a sexual abuse clinic in the mid-1980s. Leventhal's team now includes about 20 staff members, including those who work in prevention programs he's helped to develop during the last 10 years. Prevention efforts include parenting groups, weekly home visits with socially high-risk first-time mothers, and a phone system in which volunteers check in with first-time mothers to see if they need help or advice.

The worst cases Leventhal sees involve serious injuries to children under 3 years, who don't have the language skills to explain what happened to them. These cases are very painful for doctors and staff as well, he said. But the rewards when his team is able to make a difference are gratifying. "The best-case scenario is that the abuse is recognized early and stopped," he said. "Then the parents can get help, and the abuser can get an intensive intervention so that the family can be reunified."

Name: John M. Leventhal, MD.

Title: Professor of pediatrics; medical director of the Child Abuse and Child Abuse Prevention Programs.

Area of expertise: Child abuse.

Place of birth: Boston.

Age: 60.

College: Brown University.

Med School: Tufts University School of Medicine.

Training: Pediatric residency and chief resident, Yale-New Haven Hospital; Fellowship in the Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholars Program at Yale.

Family: Married to Beverly Hodgson, former state Superior Court judge, currently a private mediator and arbitrator; two children: Daniel, 23; Adam, 28.

What is most challenging to you in academic medicine? Balancing work, family and play!

What is most rewarding? I enjoy planning and reviewing research projects. It's always exciting to figure out a way to study an important clinical question.

What do you like most about your practice? The challenge of meeting with families, interviewing the parents about what's happened to their children and examining the children in a way that allows us to collect the appropriate medical information but also respects the child's needs.

Personal interests or pastimes? Tennis, skiing and being a long-suffering Red Sox fan.

Last book read: *Banishing Verona* by Margot Livesey and *Mountains Beyond Mountains* by Tracy Kidder.

What would you do to improve our clinical environment if you had a magic wand?

Improve the clinical spaces in pediatrics so that they are truly child- and family-friendly.

DON'T LOSE YOUR MEDICAL LICENSE: YALE CME PROVIDES NEW STATE-MANDATED COURSES

The Yale CME Office now provides an Online Learning Program that covers the four topic areas mandated for relicensure by the state of Connecticut.

Since October 1, the state has required that physicians applying for license renewal have completed at least 50 "contact hours" of continuing education during the previous 24 months. Each contact hour—a minimum of 50 minutes of continuing education activity—must be in the physician's practice area, reflect the physician's professional needs in order to meet the public's health care needs and include at least one contact hour of training or education each in infectious diseases

(e.g. AIDS, HIV), risk management, sexual assault and domestic violence. The four mandated courses on infectious diseases, risk management, sexual assault and domestic violence are available through the Yale CME Online Learning Program.

Through the Online Learning Program, physicians may view Yale grand rounds online and earn CME credit. Viewers can follow a digital video recording of the speaker while viewing a synchronized slide show. More than 30 clinically focused medical, pediatric and surgical grand rounds are available, and new lectures will be added each

month. A cumulative CME credit total will be maintained in physicians' individual "MyYaleCME" database.

To view, visit cme.yale.edu, link to Online Learning and enter information as a new registrant. (Yale faculty may enter their net ID, which allows complimentary viewing). After one-time registration, physicians may log back into the system. After viewing each grand rounds, attendees will be asked to answer a few questions concerning the clarity and balance of the presentation. Once responses are submitted, the corresponding number of CME hours will be credited.

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