



Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences Section – 2007

I3 Adolescent Neonaticide: Psychiatric and Legal Perspectives

*Gagan Dhaliwal, MD**, 608 Davis Circle, Huntsville, AL 35801; *Stephen B. Billick, MD**, 11 East 68 Street, 1-B, New York, NY 10021; and *Neil S. Kaye, MD**, 5301 Limestone Road, Suite 103, Wilmington, DE 19808

After attending this presentation, attendees will understand the psychiatric and legal aspects of adolescents' infanticide; how the legal system and society deals with adolescent neonaticide; the role of denial of pregnancy, increased passivity tendencies, dissociation, and panic in infanticide, and the role of a forensic psychiatrist as well as interaction with media and the legal system; and the prevention of neonaticide through use of safe haven laws, adoption, abortion, and considering psychiatric, developmental and social factors.

This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by enhancing the knowledge of adolescent neonaticide by describing the role of forensic mental professionals and how the legal system and society deal with adolescent neonaticide.

Gagan Dhaliwal, MD, will discuss the public health and epidemiological aspects of neonaticide. Dr. Dhaliwal will describe how the justice system has resolved some of these cases and summarize society's reactions to these crimes. Implications of absence of a neonaticide defense in United States will be discussed. He will also discuss preventive aspects of neonaticide among adolescents, including use of adoption, controversial abortion, and "Safe haven legislation" that allows a mother to drop her baby at a hospital or a designated area.

Stephen B. Billick, MD, will present aspects of clinical and forensic evaluation of an adolescent charged with neonaticide. Dr. Billick will describe common psychiatric symptomatology and psychological underpinnings that can explain the motives for this illegal act, including increased likelihood of passivity, social isolation, immaturity, denial of pregnancy, and brief psychosis.

Neil Kaye, MD, will discuss specific roles of a forensic psychiatrist in neonaticide cases including dealing with attorneys and media. Dr. Kaye will describe use of neonaticide syndrome defense, men's rea defense, and ways to assess culpability and insanity. Specific aspects of forensic report writing and testimony regarding neonaticide will be discussed as well.

Adolescent Neonaticide, Denial of Pregnancy, Safe Haven Laws