Italian pediatricians need knowledge about maltreatment and abuse of children. Actions more than words

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Italian Medical Doctors do not receive adequate information about the reality of child abuse and maltreatment during their university studies and career, neither during their Specialization in Pediatrics. This lack of knowledge makes it difficult to recognize and to know how to intervene when we are in our own surgeries (if we become general doctors or pediatricians). In 2017 Istat (Italian Institute of Statistics) registered a hundred thousand children mistreated, of which 15 per cent were victims of domestic violence (one out of 5 of the total number of Italian children). The FIMP (Italian Federation of General Pediatricians), the organization which encompasses more than 7 thousand general pediatricians of the country (80 per cent), conscious of this difficulty has decided to improve the knowledge of general pediatricians, by organizing one day training session about all the principal types of abuse situations, the symptoms, signs, diagnosis, intervention in case of child abuse and maltreatments. There have been 26 sessions over the last 2 years, all around the country, each with about 50 partecipants and were conducted together with the Italian Society of Pediatricians (SIP). After this first step last June a national study group was instituted, with a national coordinator and one or two representatives for each of the twenty Italian region. This group aims to help spread knowledge about these themes and to create network of cooperation among professionals who take care of children in these situations. Last November the FIMP signed an agreement with the Italian Authority’s Guarantor for Children and Adolescents to work together for create a map of every structure dedicated to the care of children and adolescents, such as hospitals, surgeries, health districts, law courts, courts for minors of every town and region, to make it easier for the doctors to intervene, cooperating with professionals in his own reality. The group also has an important role of psychological support of collegues when they feel in doubt or are afraid of intervening. As the International Convention of New York says; to pursue the best interest of the child, even if it is not so simple.