

DIRECT EXAM OF EXPERTS

(Sample Questions)

Technical Qualifications:

- Please tell us about your education
- What work have you done since completing your degree?
- Are you currently employed in the medical field?
- What is your current position?
- How long have you worked in this position?
- Do you specialize in the area of child abuse? What is your specialty?
- How long has this been your area of expertise?
- What type of training, if any, have you received to prepare you to work in this area of expertise?
- Have you worked specifically with (insert type of injury)?
- How many cases have you handled that involved (insert type of injury)?
- In those cases, did you render an opinion as to whether child abuse injuries had occurred?

Persuasive Qualifications:

- Have you written any articles related to (insert type of injury)?
- Were those articles published? What was the date of your last publication?
- What was the subject matter of those articles?
- Is there any current literature related to the causation of child abuse injuries, similar to the injuries in this case?
- Have you reviewed any current literature in preparation for this case?
- What literature have you reviewed?
- Can you summarize the literature you relied upon?

Expert's Data:

- Have you had the opportunity to review documents related to this case?
- What documents have you reviewed?
- How did you choose what to review?
- Where did you obtain this information?
- What did you find in those documents that explained child abuse?
- What did you find in reviewing those documents that ruled out child abuse?
- What did you conclude after reviewing all relevant documentation?
- Did you perform any tests?
- What tests did you perform?
- Where were the findings of (state the type of test)?
- How do those findings support your conclusion?

Expert's Opinion:

- Were you able to form an opinion as to whether or not child abuse has occurred?
- What information did you review to help you reach your opinion?
- Did you employ any evidence-based methods in reviewing this information?

- Did you employ and evidence-based principles in reviewing this information?
- How did you apply those methods/principles to the facts of this case?
- Are these methods/principles generally accepted in the medical field?
- Are these methods reliable? Please explain
- Did you base your opinion on objective findings? What were those findings?
- Did you consider any other diagnostic possibilities when forming your opinion? What were those?

Expert's Theory:

- Why did you base your opinion on... (state specific data on which the expert relied)?
- Why did you consider... (state specific data on which the expert relied)?
- What did you conclude from...(state specific data on which the expert relied)?

Expert's Assumptions:

- Did you make any assumptions?__What were they?
- Why did you make those assumptions?
- How did that assumption assist you in arriving at your conclusion?

Intracranial Bleeding:

- How far would a child have to fall to suffer serious intracranial injuries?
- What is the difference between a subdural hematoma and an epidural hematoma?
- How far would a child have to fall to suffer a subdural hematoma?

Fractures:

- What does callus formation tell you about bone fractures?
- What developmental anomalies contribute to fractures in the posterior part of the parietal bone?
- What other conditions, if any, may cause bone fractures?
- Can certain types of bone fractures mimic child abuse? What are they?
- What factors, if any, help determine if the fracture is child abuse?

Retinal Hemorrhages:

- What type of testing is useful to show retinal hemorrhaging?
- Did you conduct this test?
- What conclusions, if any, did you draw from the findings of this test?
- What is the difference between unilateral and bilateral retinal hemorrhages?

Subdural Hematoma:

- What are specific symptoms, if any, of subdural hematoma?
- What are non-specific symptoms of subdural hematoma?
- Was a computed tomography (CT) scan performed? When?
- What were the findings?
- Was a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) performed? When?
- What were the findings?
- Was a neurological exam performed? When?

- What were the findings?
- Was the head circumference plotted? When?
- What were the findings?
- What is an infantile form of subdural hematoma?
- Are there other diagnosis that may mimic subdural hematoma? Please explain

Shaken Baby Syndrome:

- What are the classic features of Shaken Baby Syndrome?
- Can an infant be shaken with sufficient force to cause brain injury and leave no external injuries?
- What type of injuries may result from traumatic brain injury?

Choking:

- What is dysphagic choking?
- Can dysphagic choking look like child abuse? Please explain
- Can choking result in subdural hematoma?
- Can choking result in retinal hemorrhaging?

Evaluation of Child Abuse:

- What does it mean for the child to have a history of trauma?
- Is the history of the trauma consistent with the nature of the injury? Please explain
- What history/explanation was obtained from the caretaker?
- Is that history consistent with the nature of the injuries to the child?
- Were there any photographs taken of the child's injury? What did those photographs show?
- Were there any tests performed during the initial observation of the injury? What were they?
- Was any follow up testing scheduled? When?
- Have the caretakers followed up?
- What suggestion, if any, do you have for treatment?
- What are the child's developmental capabilities?
- What is the significance, if any, in seeking medical treatment immediately for (insert type of injury) as opposed to delaying medical treatment?
- What risk factors, if any, did you consider in forming your opinion about child abuse in this case?