



## MWIA CASE STUDIES

### Case 13: VIOLENCE CAUSING PERMANENT INJURY OR DISFIGUREMENT

#### Objectives

- To highlight that corporal punishment still exists
- To demonstrate how child violence can lead to permanent physical and psychological disability
- To show that being orphaned at an early age and not having a caring guardian is a risk factor for child abuse

#### Narrative Case

A 15 year old female suffered physical abuse as a child which led to loss of sight in the left eye. She was orphaned at five years of age and lived with her mother's cousin who became her guardian. At six years of age, her guardian's wife had a child whom she was made to care for. When the child was four months old, her guardian beat her with a broom because she was sitting with the baby in the sun. He beat her so mercilessly that six strands of broomstick entered into her left eye ball. She was rushed to hospital by neighbours and the broomstick strands were removed from her eye. However, she was blind in the left eye and since that time has been living with her aunt (mother's sister). This incident caused disunity in the family. Even though she was a child when it happened, she remembers the events vividly, feels depressed whenever she remembers it and does not want to associate with her former guardian.

#### Learning Points

1. Always suspect abuse in a child not living with their parents. This is a common practice in Nigeria as even parents who are alive give their children to relatives and friends living in cities and urban areas.
2. Physical abuse has both physical and psychological consequences. The psychological component is usually difficult to deal with and can be carried throughout life. Therefore psychiatric assessment and psychological counselling should be carried out in anyone that has faced any form of abuse whether as a child or as an adult.
3. Countries need to enforce laws against corporal punishment.
4. Permanent disability from child abuse is disheartening.