



No hiding for child abusers (图)

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21 June 2007. People who shake children hard enough to cause brain damage may soon be unable to hide behind false defences in court, thanks to new UQ research.

Researchers from the University of Queensland have conducted tests on a true-to-life model of a baby to show exactly how shaking damages the infant brain.

The researchers have successfully tested a numerical model that accurately predicts the type and extent of injuries based on real brain scans from cases of alleged child abuse.

Until now, it has been difficult for doctors looking at scans to say whether brain damage in a baby was caused from shaking or from other causes such as an accidental fall or asphyxiation.

Project leader UQ School of Engineering Senior Lecturer Dr Faris Albermani said the next step was to improve the modelling so it could show how long it would take before shaking caused damage.

The results and methodology of the project, partially funded by the Abused Child Trust, was recently published in the Biomechanics and Modeling in Mechanobiology journal.

The UQ team which includes civil engineering PhD candidate Zac Couper and Department of Child Health Clinical Associate Professor Dr Denis Stark, has received a private donation to continue their research but are searching for more funds to eventually improve the quality of medical and legal evidence in abuse cases.

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