

22 November 2000

### **Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy: Methods of Identification**

**The Countess of Mar** asked Her Majesty's Government:

Whether the Chief Medical Officer has formed a task force to study Munchausen's syndrome by proxy; if he has, what are the terms of reference; who has been appointed to chair the task force; who are the members; what are their interests; and whom they have consulted, or will consult. [HL4700]

**Lord Hunt of Kings Heath:** The Chief Medical Officer has not formed a task force to study Munchausen's syndrome by proxy. However, the Griffiths review (Review of the Research Framework in the North Staffordshire NHS Trust) recommended that the Department of Health convene an expert and

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inter-disciplinary panel to review methods of identification of children who have either had illnesses induced or fabricated by their carer, including the use of covert video surveillance, within the framework of the Government's interagency guidance for child protection Working Together to Safeguard Children (1999). In response to this recommendation, which the Government accepted, a steering group has been formed to develop draft guidance. It is intended that this guidance will be put out for public consultation in spring 2001 with a view to publishing the final document in summer 2001. External members of the steering group include representatives from professional associations covering nursing, paediatrics, social services, psychiatry, police and professions allied to medicine. The panel is chaired by a senior official from the Department of Health.