

loved one has somehow escaped death or has been incorrectly identified. This appears to be a form of inhibited grief which the authors believe is more properly described as doubt than denial.

For example a mother who lost her adult son in the Zeebrugge disaster was advised not to see the body. After the burial and inquest she began to doubt that the body had been her son's. 'They said his hair was thinning but it wasn't'. She accepted an offer to see the photographs and was able to satisfy herself that they were of her son and that he was indeed dead. 'So it is him in the grave', she concluded.

Children

Cathcart¹ thinks that bereaved children who ask to see a body should probably be allowed to do so, but that adults should prepare them for the questions they are likely to face from other children at school.

Dr. Elizabeth Weller and her colleagues³, in a survey of 38 bereaved children in the USA aged between five and 12 years, found that most children were expected to visit the funeral home and attend the

funeral service, and also that they wanted to do so. Most parents described the children's behaviour on these occasions as 'basically controlled', i.e. little or no crying. When the children were psychiatrically assessed two months after the death, they did not show increased symptoms of depression or other psychiatric symptoms. This is in contrast to earlier suggestions by Furman^{5,6} and Schowalter⁷ that symptoms of depression and anxiety may be related to children's participation in the funeral activities (although when Furman's study was repeated with a control group, the author noted the same symptoms in grieving children who had not attended a funeral⁵). The long-term reactions of the children in Weller's study are not yet known.

The authors warn that additional studies are necessary to determine whether attending the funeral is associated with better resolution of the child's grief or with psychiatric symptoms in the long-term. One eight-year-old in the study said the worst part of the entire experience of her father's death was the funeral: 'It was really hard. But I am glad I went. I think all kids

should go to their parent's funeral . . . because it's a good way to send them off'.

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CORRECTION

Bereavement Care, Volume 9 No. 2 (Summer 1990). The photograph on the front cover by J. Twining should have been credited to *Social Work Today* and not to *Community Care*. We apologise to both journals for the error.

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