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Subject: How should you challenge an abuser's claim of Parental Alienation Syndrome?

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By Barry Goldstein, J.D. and Elizabeth Liu, J.D.

How should you challenge an abuser's claim of Parental Alienation Syndrome?

PAS, and its new iteration, parental or child alienation, is a widely discredited junk science theory (recently rejected in DSM-V) often used successfully by abusers to prevent a full investigation into allegations of domestic violence and child abuse. Most judges are not aware of the origin and history of this theory—it was developed by a father who also argued that sex between children and adults can be acceptable—and surely would not want to support a theory that promotes incest. Advocates have to be prepared to challenge PAS in court.

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