

## MISINFORMATION REGARDING PARENTAL ALIENATION – 2018

### Article Containing Misinformation

Vincenzo Puppo (2018). Commentary on: An objective measure of splitting in parental alienation: the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire. *Journal of Forensic Sciences*, 63(1):342.

**Abstract:** Bernet et al. recently wrote in the *Journal of Forensic Sciences* “The Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire may be useful for both clinicians and forensic practitioners in evaluating children of divorced parents when there is a concern about the possible diagnosis of parental alienation.” Parental alienation syndrome (PAS) is defined as a mental state in which a child, usually one whose parents are engaged in a high-conflict separation or divorce, allies himself strongly with one parent and rejects a relationship with the other parent without legitimate justification. Many scholars of psychology and the law have examined the literature regarding PAS: they have encountered a lack of empirical studies published in peer-reviewed journals. Remains a paucity of scientific evidence that PAS must be a psychiatric diagnosis. The courts are quite capable of dealing with this type of scenario without invoking a mental illness to explain a child’s malignity against a parent. These conflicted children should not be labeled as mentally ill. PAS has neither clinical relevance to justify its adoption as a mental illness.

### Article Refuting Misinformation

William Bernet (2018). Author’s response. *Journal of Forensic Sciences*, 63(1):343-344.

Abstract. In August 2017, my colleagues and I published an article online in the *Journal of Forensic Sciences* (JFS), “An Objective Measure of Splitting in Parental Alienation: The Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire.” Within a few days, Dr. Puppo submitted a commentary on that article in the form of a letter to the JFS Editor in Chief. Now, this submission responds to that commentary. In his poorly written essay, Dr. Puppo said almost nothing about the article by Bernet et al. This correspondent provided no criticisms of the research design, the literature review, the selection of experimental and control participants, the measure that we employed, the collection of data, the statistical analyses, or the discussion of results in the paper that prompted his letter to the editor. He did object to our conclusion, which stated, “The [Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire] may be useful for both clinicians and forensic practitioners in evaluating children of divorced parents when there is a concern about the possible diagnosis of parental alienation.” Instead of addressing the pros and cons of our research, he launched into criticisms of the concept of parental alienation syndrome (PAS). The commentary by Dr. Puppo overflowed with misinformation and fake news regarding PAS, which is explained in this response.