Children with impulsive-affective CD are more likely to respond to treatment than those with pre-affective CD.

BY MICHELE G. SULLIVAN
Mid-Atlantic Bureau

T O R O N T O — Impulsive-affective conduct disorder responds better to medication than does pre-affective conduct disorder, Dr. Robert Findling said at the joint annual meeting of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and the Canadian Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

“Children with impulsive-affective CD respond better because they are more reactive and impulsive,” Dr. Findling said. “This type of conduct disorder presents a different challenge. The type of behavior is more prevalent in males and often comorbid with depression, anxiety, learning disabilities, or attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Both types are associated with poor long-term outcomes. This is a malignant condition. It’s pervasive, pernicious, and associated with increased risk for antisocial behavior, incarceration, and substance abuse. This is not just a kid being dysfunctional,” he said.

Impulsive-affective CD involves reactive, unplanned, uncontrolled acts of aggression. The child may damage his own property or expose himself to physical harm. He loses control in front of other people and fights without purpose, often against someone stronger. He might express remorse after an explosion.

Preadatory CD differs in its characteristic symptoms. The aggressive acts are planned, controlled, and often concealed. The child is very careful to protect himself from harm in the incident and tries to plan it so that he profits in some way. Theft is often a motive. The child may say he is proud of his behavior.

Methylphenidate has been shown effective in CD, decreasing aggression scores significantly, compared with placebo (Arch. Gen. Psychiatry 1997;54:1073-80). Lithium has also been shown effective, although it has never been embraced as a treatment due to the adverse events in this group, Dr. Findling said. “Those include nausea, vomiting, and urinary frequency. In 2003, researchers concluded that di-