

The New York Times® Reprints

This copy is for your personal, noncommercial use only. You can order presentation-ready copies for distribution to your colleagues, clients or customers [here](#) or use the "Reprints" tool that appears next to any article. Visit [www.nytreprints.com](http://www.nytreprints.com) for samples and additional information. [Order a reprint of this article now.](#)



February 19, 2011

# Pediatrician Facing Claims of Sex Abuse Dies at Home

By **TAMAR LEWIN**

Dr. **Melvin D. Levine**, 71, a pediatrician and a leader in the field of learning disabilities, died in North Carolina a day after a sexual abuse and malpractice suit was filed against him in Boston.

The North Carolina medical examiner's office confirmed that Dr. Levine's death at his home in Rougemont, N.C., had been reported by the Orange County Sheriff's Office on Friday, but it said that there would be no statement this weekend on the cause of death. Dr. Levine's lawyer, Edward Mahoney, said he did not have details on the cause or timing of the death.

"This entire episode is a tragedy," Mr. Mahoney said. "Throughout it, Dr. Levine never wavered that his care and treatment of all children was appropriate in all respects, and he steadfastly denied the allegations against him."

Dr. Levine was a leading advocate for children with learning disabilities, whose fame spread through his books, including "A Mind at a Time"; his PBS series, "Misunderstood Minds"; national lectures; and an appearance on "The Oprah Winfrey Show."

With **Charles Schwab**, he founded a nonprofit group, **All Kinds of Minds**, that has trained thousands of teachers nationwide. Dr. Levine's approach emphasized that whatever their learning disabilities — or learning differences, as he called them — all children had strengths they could build on as well.

While Dr. Levine had been dogged by complaints of sexual abuse of patients for years, none were proved or widely publicized.

So it came as a shock in medical and education circles three years ago when a Boston lawyer, Carmen L. Durso, filed a lawsuit accusing Dr. Levine of sexually abusing five former patients when they were boys. Mr. Durso held a news conference at his office on Thursday to announce a new

[medical malpractice](#) and sexual abuse suit against Dr. Levine, charging him with abusing 40 patients, all boys, while he was a doctor at Children's Hospital Boston, from 1966 to 1985.

The lawsuit, filed in Suffolk Superior Court in Massachusetts, claimed that Dr. Levine had "stroked, massaged and manipulated the genitals of his patients in a manner which was not medically necessary." It sought certification as a class action, on behalf of an estimated 5,000 boys whom Dr. Levine treated while at the hospital.

Mr. Durso said Saturday that he would make no statement this weekend, out of respect for Dr. Levine's family.

Dr. Levine was never convicted of any abuse charge, and he never faced criminal charges.

There were, however, accusations against him in North Carolina as well as Massachusetts. In March 2009, as the North Carolina medical board was investigating such charges, [Dr. Levine agreed that he would never again practice medicine](#).

Dr. Levine, a Rhodes scholar, was chief of ambulatory [pediatrics](#) at Children's Hospital Boston before moving to the [University of North Carolina](#). He is survived by his wife, Bambi.



**MORE IN U.S.** (1 OF 21 ARTICLES)

OPEN

## **Teaching the Lessons Learned in War, to Thwart Attackers at Home**

[Read More »](#)