

Parenting & Problem Behaviors of Children with Diabetes & Their Siblings

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Abstract

Sixty families were studied to examine the relationship among authoritarian, psychologically controlling, and authoritative parenting and the internalizing and externalizing behaviors of children with diabetes and their siblings. For both children with diabetes and siblings, mothers' and fathers' authoritarian and fathers' psychologically controlling parenting were associated positively with externalizing behaviors; fathers' authoritative parenting was negatively related. For siblings, mothers' and fathers' authoritarian and fathers' psychologically controlling parenting were positively related to internalizing behaviors.

Rationale

- Research has shown a relationship between negative parenting and negative child outcomes; therefore, the investigation of parental styles and child behaviour is significant to the study of family adaptation.
- There is the potential for added stress in families with a child having diabetes.
- A plausible question, then, is whether the relationship between parenting and child outcomes differs depending on the presence of a child's chronic illness, such as diabetes.
- Although the relationships between other parenting styles and child outcomes have been examined in previous research, this study is among the first to specifically examine psychologically controlling parenting of children with diabetes.

Purpose

Study the relationship of parenting styles and problem behaviors of children with diabetes and their siblings.

Research Question

What is the association between mothers' and fathers' authoritarian, psychologically controlling, and authoritative parenting styles and the internalizing and externalizing behaviours of children with diabetes and their siblings?'

Procedures

- 60 Parents were visited in their homes and provided informed consent forms.
- Mothers and fathers independently completed self-report questionnaires on demographic characteristics, parenting, and the internalizing and externalizing behaviors of the child with diabetes and a sibling.

Measures

Parenting

- Psychological control was assessed using an adaptation of a measure developed by Barber (1996).
- Authoritarian and authoritative parenting was measured with an instrument developed by Robinson, Mandleco, Olsen, and Hart (1995).

Child Problem Behaviors

- Assessed with an adaptation of the externalizing and internalizing subscales of the Social Skills Questionnaire (Gresham & Elliott, 1990).

Analysis

- Descriptive statistics were calculated for independent and dependent variables.
- Preliminary correlations were estimated for child age, mothers' and fathers' education, family income, and internalizing or externalizing behaviors of children with diabetes and siblings. Significant correlations were not found, so these potential confounds were not included in regression analyses.
- Bivariate correlations were estimated for the parenting variables and internalizing and externalizing behaviors.
- Hierarchical regression models were estimated using separate models for mothers' and fathers' assessments.
 - Predictors were child sex and each of the three parenting variables.
 - Interactions between parenting and sex were also tested in the models.

Results

- Findings support previous research showing associations between mothers' and fathers' authoritarian parenting and child problem behaviors. Authoritarian parenting associated positively with both children with diabetes' and siblings' externalizing behaviors.
- Fathers' psychological control and authoritative parenting related positively and negatively, respectively, with children with diabetes' and siblings' externalizing behaviors.
- Relationships between parenting and internalizing behaviors were only found for siblings.

Implications for Practitioners

- Parenting programs tend to focus on Baumrind's parenting typologies. It is important, however, to educate parents on lesser known parenting styles such as psychological control and their potentially negative associations with child outcomes.
- As fathers' parenting does contribute to child outcomes, practitioners should consider designing parenting programs that are accessible to both fathers and mothers.
- Parenting programs should address the individual differences of children and the possibility of parenting nuances for different children in the same family, particularly if a child has a chronic condition.

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