

FC27-05

DO PARENTAL PRACTICES INFLUENCE CHILD MENTAL HEALTH? A GREEK LONGITUDINAL STUDY

C. Bakoula¹, I. Vassi¹, A. Veltsista¹, A. Palili¹, A. Gika¹, G. Kolaitis²

¹1st Department of Paediatrics, ²Department of Child Psychiatry, University of Athens, Medical School., Athens, Greece

Introduction: Research about the continuity of mental health problems from childhood to adolescence and the influence of parenting practices on these is limited, but necessary for appropriate family counselling.

Objectives: To examine the relationship between aspects of parental control, such as monitoring, physical punishment, and unlimited material provision, on the emotional and behavioural health of children up to adolescence.

Methods: A representative sample of 2695 Greek adolescents was followed-up from birth to 18yrs. Mental health problems at 7 and 18yrs were assessed by the Rutter A2 and YSR psychometric tools, respectively.

Results: A strong correlation was found between behavioural problems in childhood and adolescence for both genders, while emotional problems were more likely to persist in boys. Age and sex-specific models revealed significant positive associations between frequent use of physical punishment during childhood and Total, Emotional, and Conduct problems in both genders, while parental monitoring was associated with higher scores on Conduct and Total problems mostly in boys at 7yrs. Parental monitoring was more strongly linked to psychological problems in adolescence, while the relationship between punishment and mental health problems was stronger in 7-year-olds than in adolescents. Material provision in childhood was not associated with the outcomes. The long-term effect of parenting strategies on adolescent mental health was mediated or confounded by mental health status at 7yrs.

Conclusions: Early interventions are necessary as mental health problems strongly persist from childhood to late adolescence. The adverse effects of unsuitable parental practices need to be recognised and improved.