

Perfectionism in Adolescents: a Longitudinal Study in a Portuguese Sample

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Introduction: Perfectionism is a personality trait characterized by a person's striving for flawlessness and setting excessively high performance standards, accompanied by overly critical self-evaluations and concerns regarding others' evaluations. This trait has been associated with a broad range of psychopathological conditions, starting in adolescence. In this context, prevention of its effects must start early, and the efficacy of reducing perfectionist levels in adolescents must be empirically investigated.

Objective: To analyse, for the first time, if one session to cope with perfectionism has the effect of reducing the levels of this trait after two and six months later. **Method:** 868 adolescents (610 girls), aged 15.73 ± 1.571 years, from two secondary schools in Coimbra, Portugal, answered the Portuguese validated version of the Child and Adolescent Perfectionism Scale (CAPS). Two groups were formed: intervention group received one skill session oriented to reduce perfectionism (N=615); control group without intervention (N=253). Both groups answered CAPS again after two/T1 and six/T2 months.

Results: No significant differences between genders were found in Total CAPS, Self Oriented Perfectionism/SOP and Self Prescribed Perfectionism/SPP. At T1 significant mean reductions were observed in SOP at the intervention group (T0= 39.58 ± 8.554 vs. T1: 38.44 ± 8.676 t= 3.498, p=.001) but not at the control group (T0= 40.48 ± 8.998 vs. T1: 39.34 ± 7.753 t=1.894, p=.061). No significant differences were found in Total CAPS and SPP. At T2, SOP reduction remained in the intervention group (T1= 38.44 ± 8.676 vs. T2: 38.67 ± 8.375 t= -.640, p=.020).

Conclusions: Adolescents are sensitive to short interventions aiming to reduce perfectionism.