

WHICH CHARACTERISTICS CONTRIBUTE TO THE QUALITY OF THE RELATION BETWEEN ADDICTED PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN?

1. BACKGROUND

The impacts of parent's alcohol and drug addiction on their children are widely known. However, more than the substance use itself, it is how addiction affects the parent/child relationship that is most harmful to the child's development (Raitasalo & Holmila, 2017). Indeed, addiction to alcohol and drug compromises the parent's ability to establish a warm relationship with their child (Solis et al., 2013). Addiction would be associated with colder and more authoritarian parental attitude (Solis et al., 2013). Aside from alcohol and drug use, the parent/child relationship is dependent on the parent's psychological well-being, parenting skills, and child maladjustments (Lippold and al., 2019; Schoppe-Sullivan & Mangelsdorf, 2013).

2. OBJECTIVES

The present study aims to identify whether the level of parental self-efficacy beliefs, the level of parents' psychological distress and the intensity of children's behavior problems may contribute to explain the quality of parent-child relationship in families where parents are addicted to alcohol and drugs.

3. METHOD

Sample:

62 families with addicted parents who participated in a family parenthood program: 72.6% mothers [36.2 years old (SD = 5.7)] and 27.4% fathers [40.4 years old (SD = 5.2)].

Measures:

Parent/child relationship (Rohner, 2005)

Parental self-efficacy beliefs (Dumka et al., 1996) :

52% reported mild to moderate parental self-efficacy beliefs

Parental psychological distress (Prévile et al., 1992):

50% reported psychological distress

Intensity of children's behavior problems (Eyberg, 1978):

21,4% reached a clinical threshold of intensity of problem behavior

4. RESULTS

Table 1. Correlations with parent and child relationship

Variables	M (SD)	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Parent' substance use gravity	9.05 (3.09)	.45**	-.21	-.04	-.04	.11	.20
2. Parent psychological distress	6.72 (1.77)	-	-.29*	.22	-.36**	.21	.34**
3. Parental self-efficacy beliefs	3.86 (.51)	-	-	-.22	.28*	-.41*	-.32*
4. Intensity of children's behavior problem	103.98 (32,89)	-	-	-	-.22	.52**	.27*
5. Warmth/Affection relationship	3.71 (.42)	-	-	-	-	-.42**	-.64**
6. Hostility/Aggression relationship	1.53 (.44)	-	-	-	-	-	.60**
7. Indifference and Neglect	1.57 (.49)	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 2. Quality of the relation between addicted parents and their children

Variables	B	SE B	β	t	p
Regression 1. Warmth/Affection relationship					
Parent psychological distress	-.07	.03	-.28	-2.12	.04
Parental' self-efficacy beliefs	.13	.11	.16	1.81	.24
Intensity of children behavior problem	-.00	-.00	-.13	-.98	.33
R² = .41 (p = .02)					
Regression 2. Hostility/Aggression relationship					
Parent psychological distress	.02	.03	.02	.14	.89
Parental' self-efficacy beliefs	-.25	.10	-.29	-2.49	.02
Intensity of children behavior problem	.00	.00	.45	3.95	.001
R² = .59 (p = .001)					
Regression 3. Indifference and Neglect					
Parent psychological distress	.08	.04	.27	2.07	.04
Parental' self-efficacy beliefs	-.18	.13	-.19	-1.46	.15
Intensity of children behavior problem	.00	.00	.17	1.32	.19
R² = .45 (p = .006)					

5. CONCLUSION

- Associated with parental self-efficacy beliefs and the intensity of children's behavior problem, **a higher level of psychological distress** may explain the quality of the parent/child relationship [less warmth/affection and more indifference/neglect].
- Associated with the psychological distress of the parent and the intensity of children's behavior problem, the **lack of parental self-efficacy beliefs** may explain more hostility/aggression in parent/child relationship.
- Results support the relevance of introducing interventions targeting the psychological distress and the parental self-efficacy beliefs for adults addicted to alcohol and drug, in order to improve their parent/child relationship.

