



Original Article

Comparative study of parenting styles and parenting self-efficacy in mothers of children with and without anxiety symptoms

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Abstract

Introduction: Anxiety disorders are one of the most prevalent mental problems in children and could lead to major dysfunctions. Most family studies have found a large overlap between anxiety disorders in children and their family members. This study aimed to examine the relationship between parenting style and parenting self-efficacy in mothers of anxious and non-anxious children.

Materials and Methods: This is a causal-comparative study, done in 2013. The sample consisted of 110 children and their mothers (55 in experimental and 55 in control groups). Anxious children were selected through convenience sampling and non-anxious children were matched and selected based on demographic variables of the experimental group from elementary schools of Mashhad. Inventories of quality of mother-child relationship scale, parenting self-efficacy, Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) of Achenbach System and demographic characteristics were used. Data analyzed by SPSS software, descriptive statistics and independent t-test was used for data analysis.

Results: Findings indicated that mothers of anxious children had significantly higher levels of conflict than mothers in the control group ($P < 0.001$). They also showed significantly lower levels of accessibility, warmth, responsiveness, and self-efficacy in relation to their children ($P < 0.001$).

Conclusion: Findings of this study indicated that anxiety in children is strongly associated with parenting styles and parenting self-efficacy. Therefore, it is suggested that parenting factors should be considered in the evaluation, treatment, and prevention of anxiety in children.

Keywords: Anxiety, Children, Parenting, Self-efficacy

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Introduction

There is an increasing interest for understanding childhood disorders nowadays, especially internalizing disorders such anxiety (1). Anxiety disorder is most prevalent in general population, which is mostly, rooted in childhood, in total, 18% of people, at a certain age and 25% of people during their lifespan experience one of these disorders (2-4). Hence anxiety and internalizing problems has been increased among children and adolescents (5,6). Although fear and anxiety are part of the normal evolution during the childhood, (7) but some types of anxiety problems remain constant over the time and

will continue to adulthood mostly, Many anxiety disorders which can be seen in adulthood occur in early life (6,8). Understanding the etiology of anxiety disorders comprehensively, recent study emphasizes on the role of parental factor in development and maintenance anxiety disorder (6,9). Although the mechanism through which parents transform their anxiety's susceptibility is exactly unknown (10), but some assumptions has been made. To explain the mechanisms of this approach we can refer to the following factors: The major mechanism is genetic transmission; study of behavioral genetics indicated that people inherit approximately 50% of the anxiety preparation like behavior inhibition, anxious sensitivity and fear of evaluation (10). It has been suggested that parental psychopathology may exert its effect through social learning processes, due to the modelling of parental maladaptive coping

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