

EPV0182

Fears and anxiety disorders in young children with autistic disorders

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Introduction: Current level of mental health in children and adolescents is alarming, the precursors of it disorders can appear at an early age.

Objectives: The phenomenological and prognostic features of children's anxiety and phobic states were studied.

Methods: The study conducted in 2022-2023 included 95 children of preschool age (among them 35 children under 3 years) with autistic disorders. For comparison, we used data from a follow-up study of 50 children lasting 15 years who had anxiety-phobic and autistic disorders at an early age. The control group included 30 children from the general population. Assessment of the condition was carried out by clinical methods and original scales. PANSS scales were used in follow-up.

Results: At an early age, these were fears of a protopathic nature, horror during sleep or during short-term sleepy states, the so-called "night terror". Infants showed fears of touch, fear of manipulation: cutting hair, nails, pouring water while bathing in the shower, etc., due to a violation of sensory sensitivity. Also (among toddlers) frilly fears were found - water flowing into the bath, animalistic toys, along with autistic symptoms. In the catamnesis, there was an increase in symptoms. There were differentiated affective anxiety-phobic disorders, fragmentary phenomena and extended symptoms of a procedural nature (the total score on the PANSS scale exceeded 60 points, in 15 it reached 80). In the control group, normal development took place without psychopathology.

A direct relationship was found between the age of onset, the severity of early ontogenesis, and the phenomenological features of the disorders. In the premorbid of unfavorable forms of the course of schizophrenia, phobias were noted, comorbid outposts to symptoms of psychotic disorders resembling delusion, depersonalization symptoms.

Conclusions: The findings suggest that phobic anxiety disorders in early childhood may be a precursor to mental illness later in life.

Disclosure of Interest: None Declared

EPV0183

Attachment, Emotion Regulation and Physiological Reactivity in middle-childhood: a pilot study

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Introduction: Attachment, as an interpersonal motivational system, is the relational ground that allows emotions to be regulated through action on the Autonomic Nervous System resulting in better psychological outcomes during middle childhood. Emotion

dysregulation and autonomic function are often connected to psychiatric symptoms observed in adolescence (e.g. borderline personality disorder traits) and thus middle childhood becomes a critical age for psychopathological trajectories.

Objectives: Examine the relationship between child's attachment and both psychological and physiological emotional regulation.

Methods: 20 children ($M_{age} = 10.7$, $SD = 1.25$; 65% males) were recruited from general population. Attachment was measured through the *Child Attachment Interview* (CAI), while emotional regulation was assessed with a multimethod approach, using questionnaires i.e. *How I Feel* (HIF) and *Positive and Negative Affect* (PANAS), and physiological measurements i.e. Heart Rate Variability (ratio between High Frequency and Low Frequency, HF/LF, labeled as the child's sympathovagal balance) and Heart Rate (Beats Per Minute, BPM, as an index of physiological reactivity).

Results: Statistically significant correlations emerged between the HIF-Control scale and the Mother and Father Dismissal CAI scale, the PANAS-Negative Affect scale and the Mother and Father Preoccupied Anger CAI scale. Moreover, there was a non-significant but moderate effect ($r_s > .30$) between HF/LF and the Emotional Openness and the Resolution scales of the CAI, and between BPM and the Emotional Openness scale.

Conclusions: Despite the small sample size, more secure children are able to connect with their emotions and properly use them in solving relational problems. Consequently, they are likely to succeed in understanding and regulating emotions as they manage to find more adaptive strategies their own. On the contrary, the presence of dismissal or anger (insecure attachment) towards parents would appear to lead to higher levels of psycho-physiological dysregulation, a core feature of Borderline Personality Disorder dimensions starting to emerge later in adolescence. Future studies should consider physiological dysregulation as an additional factor linked to psychopathological developmental trajectories.

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EPV0184

Emotional Experience, Physiological Reactivity, and Psychological Difficulties during middle childhood: a pilot study

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Introduction: Many studies linked expression and regulation of emotions as transdiagnostic variables involved in the emergence of psychopathological disorders. However, few studies investigated such processes during middle childhood, a critical period of life defined by significant psychological, physical, and social changes.

Objectives: Explore the relationship between child's emotion regulation - both emotional subjective experience and physiological reactivity - and child's psychological difficulties.

Methods: 20 children ($M_{age}=10.7$, $SD=1.25$; 65% males) and their mothers were recruited from general population. Emotion regulation was assessed with (1) *How I Feel* (HIF) and *Positive and Negative Affect* questionnaires (PANAS) and (2) Heart Rate (i.e., Beats Per Minute, BPM) and Heart Rate