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PUNITIVE PARENTAL DISCIPLINE AMONG ADULT VICTIMS OF CHILD ABUSE

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Aims: It has been shown that abusive experiences in childhood may be related to specific behavior patterns manifested in adulthood, especially those that refer to negative parenting practices. The aim of this study was to assess the relationship between the use of punitive parental discipline and the childhood abuse trauma in parents.

Method: Sixty six parents (30 males, 36 females, age 45.92 ± 8.79 yrs, predominantly urban) completed the socio-demographic questionnaire, the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ), and the punitive discipline self-report measure.

Results: The frequency of use of punitive discipline between parents with and without the history of abuse was not significantly different ($t = -1.298$; $p > 0.05$). The difference was not found neither among fathers ($t = -0.047$; $p > 0.05$) nor among mothers ($t = -1.951$; $p > 0.05$). Emotional abuse was the only type of childhood maltreatment related to the use of punitive discipline ($r = 0.393$; $p < 0.01$). This relationship was found among both fathers ($r = 0.428$; $p < 0.05$) and mothers ($r = 0.371$; $p < 0.05$). In females, the use of punitive discipline was additionally related to the history of emotional neglect ($r = 0.379$; $p < 0.05$).

Conclusion: The findings may emphasize the need for identification and modification of the parental discipline strategies in adult victims of child emotional abuse and neglect.