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Background: The increased interest in the phenomenology, etiology, and treatment of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) follows the recognition that OCD is a more pervasive and serious problem that was previously thought. Family studies indicate a modest tendency for OCD to occur among biological family members. Studies on twin and family-genetic analysis show that non-heritable factors present as great and possibly greater risk to the development of OCD. Psychological and familial issues are also implicated in the development and maintenance of OCD.

Objective: This study explored the relationship between parental style and OCD among a clinical sample of children and adults in Tehran, Iran.

Method: Subjects consisted of 190 patients who had sought treatment for OCD during the period from 2002 to 2009. Designation of parenting style was based on interviews using Baumrind typology. Two clinical psychologists assigned each subject to one of the four family styles: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful.

Results: The data replicate previous findings in relation to gender differences, the age of onset, family history of OCD and comorbid disorders. Patients who had experienced authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful parenting styles were significantly more likely to experience OCD. A hitherto unreported finding is the positive relationship between a mixed parenting style and OCD.

Conclusions: The present study indicates that the positive relationship between parenting styles and OCD extends beyond cultural boundaries. The psycho-social and cognitive dynamics of family-styles in relation to development and maintenance of OCD and treatment implications are discussed.