

BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS IN CHILDREN WITH EPILEPSY, AND PARENTING STRESS AND PARENTING STYLES OF THEIR MOTHERS

A. Soltanifar¹, F. Moharreri¹, A. Soltanifar², N. Mokhber², A. Ebrahimi², F. Akbarzadeh²

¹Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, ²Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences Research Center, Ibn-e-Sina Hospital, Faculty of Medicine, Mashhad University of Medical Sciences, Mashhad, Iran

Introduction: There are complicated relations between child's psychiatric problems secondary to epilepsy, maternal stress and parenting style.

Objectives: The aim of the present research is to study psychological and behavioral characteristics in children with epilepsy, study maternal stress associated with parenting these children, and parenting styles of these mothers.

Method: Children aged 3 to 7 years old with an established diagnosis of epilepsy for at least 1 year without other neurological disorders or mental retardation and their mothers were selected from child neurology clinics in Mashhad, Iran. Eligible participants were 30 epileptic children. Control group of 30 healthy children from Mashhad kindergartens were matched with epileptic children in terms of age and sex. Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQ), Parenting Stress Index (PSI), Parenting Style Questionnaire (PSQ) and a demographic questionnaire were used for data collection.

Results: Mothers of children with epilepsy had higher levels of parenting stress (in both parent and child domains) compared to the other group ($P < 0.001$). Parents with epileptic children scored higher on permissive and authoritarian parenting scales. However, the score was lower for authoritative parenting style in comparison with the scores of the control group. In general, these differences did not reach a significant level ($P > 0.05$). Children with epilepsy had significantly higher scores than normal children in terms of emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity and hence, the total difficulty score ($P < 0.05$).

Conclusion: Educational and psychological programs aimed at enhancing adjustment of parents with their children's epilepsy are greatly needed.