

Abstract 14:

Relationship between perceived parenting style, mental health, and socioeconomic factors among Grade 9 and 10 students in the Nallur Educational Division, Jaffna

Sivatharshan N¹, Hemakiri.R¹, Arulalini.M¹, Shankavi T¹, Sathsarani DMNM¹, Sivayokan S^{2, 3}, Kesavan R⁴

¹*Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna*

²*Department of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna*

³*Professorial Psychiatry Unit, Teaching Hospital Jaffna*

⁴*Department of Community and Family Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna*

Background and objective: Parenting is a crucial factor in adolescent health with the World Health Organization recognizing parenting interventions as key to enhancing adolescent mental well-being. Understanding parenting styles and their impact on mental health is essential given rising adolescent issues such as anxiety, depression, and behavioural problems. This study aimed to assess the relationship between perceived parenting style, mental health and socioeconomic factors among grade 9 and 10 school-going children in the Nallur Educational Division in Jaffna.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among grade 9 and 10 students in the Nallur Educational Division. A total of 427 students were selected using proportionate stratified random sampling. The study instrument was a self-administered questionnaire assessing parenting style and mental health with the Perceived Parenting Style Score (PPSS) and the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), respectively. PPSS categorises parenting styles as authoritative (high responsiveness and demandingness), authoritarian (high demandingness, low responsiveness), and permissive (high responsiveness, low demandingness). Perceived parenting style was determined by the highest scoring component in the PPSS. SDQ scores were categorized as normal (0-15), borderline (16-19), and abnormal (20-40). Data analysis was performed using SPSS software, applying descriptive statistics and chi-square tests.

Results: Among 404 respondents (response rate 94.6%), 73.3% were male and 26.7% female. Authoritative parenting was predominant (89.4%, n=361) and significantly associated with better mental health, with 74.2% scoring normal on the SDQ ($p<0.001$). Permissive parenting (1.24%, n=5) was linked to poorer mental health, with 60% obtaining an abnormal SDQ score. Among students with authoritarian parenting (9.41%, n=38), 42.1% had normal scores, while 18.4% had borderline and 39.5% had abnormal SDQ scores. Household income ($p=0.031$) and family conflicts ($p=0.001$) were significantly associated with parenting styles. Father's alcohol use had borderline significance with parenting style ($p=0.054$).

Conclusions and recommendations: Authoritative parenting correlates with better adolescent mental health, while authoritarian and permissive styles are linked to poorer outcomes. Since over 25% of students experience mental health issues, structured school-based mental health education programmes may be helpful.

Keywords: Parenting style, Adolescent mental health, Socioeconomic factors, Jaffna