

Oral presentation for Marce 2016 conference

Hot topics: Fathers

Title: The influence of paternal depression on their children's emotion regulation

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Objectives/Background: Research has shown that fathers can suffer from postnatal depression which may influence their parenting abilities and children's behavioural problems. There is currently limited literature on the influence of paternal depression on their children's emotion regulation abilities which is explored here using data from two cohort studies.

Methods: Secondary data analysis was conducted on the Millennium Cohort Study (MCS; n=12,396). This consisted of a representative sample of UK fathers and questionnaire data. Paternal depressive symptoms were measured at 9-months and children's emotion regulation at 3, 5 and 7 years old. Findings from the MSC were explored further using in-depth data collected in the Fathers-in Focus-study (FIF; n=160) which consisting of fathers and their children aged 3-7 years old. Clinical interviews were used to measure paternal depression and an observational waiting/frustration task was used to measure children's emotion regulation.

Results: Secondary data analysis (MCS) found that higher paternal depressive symptom during the postnatal period were associated with children's emotion regulation problems at 3, 5 and 7 years old, even after controlling for maternal depressive symptoms, marital conflict and socio-economic factors. We are currently conducting analysis on the FIF data which will be ready to present at the conference.

Conclusion/Discussion: Paternal depression maybe a risk factor for children's emotion regulation problems. However, support and parenting intervention programs are primarily targeted at mothers. We advocate a family-centred approach and involvement of fathers in programs for depressed parents.

3 Key words: Fathers, depression, emotion regulation

References:

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