

Research Article

Consistency analysis of parenting styles in Thailand during children's first year

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Abstract

This descriptive study identifies and examines the consistency of parenting styles during the first year of their children's lives. The data were collected from interviewing 4088 parents or primary care takers of the 6 month old infants during the third wave of data collection of The Prospective Cohort of Thai Children project. The instrument used was the Infant Parenting Styles Questionnaire, developed by the researchers, which reflected parental responses to infant care in five different situations. After the answers were categorized into controlling, reasoning, overprotection, and neglectful parenting styles, the weighted kappa was used for the consistency analysis. The findings revealed that during the first 6 months of life, the overprotection style was the most common, followed by the reasoning style. The controlling and neglectful styles were very seldom used. The consistency of the parental styles in the same care givers using the kappa values showed that agreement between each of the styles was very low (−0.0419 to 0.0688). This suggests that parenting styles during the first year of life seem to occur in random patterns.

Key words

consistency, infant, kappa, parenting, style.

INTRODUCTION

Parenting styles have been emphasized as an important factor influencing growing children's behavioral and emotional characteristics. Parental attitudes, as well as their interactions with children, are predictive of language and cognitive performance, perinatal complications, and health (Pryor & Woodward, 1998). Parental attitudes also predict obesity, eating behaviors, physical activity, and hyperactivity problems in school children (McDonald, 1999; Alizadeh & Andries, 2002; Chen, 2002; Lederman *et al.*, 2004; Birch *et al.*, 2007). Parenting styles influence the development of competent or problematic emotional functioning over time and across generations (Stack *et al.*, 2010), and are also indicative of adolescents' health behaviors related to fruit and vegetable intake, physical activity, tobacco use, alcohol use, mental health status, general risks, and sexual risk-taking behaviors (Hsieh, 1998; Naksusuk, 2001; Patock-Peckham *et al.*, 2001; Jackson, 2002; Miller *et al.*, 2002; O'Byrne *et al.*, 2002; Schmitz *et al.*, 2002; Huebner & Howell, 2003; Lytle *et al.*, 2003; Dwairy, 2004). While the most commonly-found style was overprotection and reasoning (Gordon, 1999; Morton *et al.*, 1999), the problem of depression has been

observed among children who experience neglectful and overprotective parenting styles (Lloyd & Miller, 1997; Zubrick *et al.*, 2010).

Classifications of parenting styles differ across studies, and typically vary between three to eight categories Patock-Peckham *et al.*, 2001). Assessment tools commonly reflect maternal sensitivity and maternal expectations for child self-control (i.e. the The National Institute of Child Development and Human Development and the Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development cited in Greenberger & Goldberg, 1989; Rhee *et al.*, 2006).

The most commonly-used classification method comes from Baumrind (1971), who suggested that parenting styles are constructed according to standard strategies parents use in their own child-rearing practice. The construct of parental style represents normal variations in parents' attempts to control and socialize their children; however, this does not account for deviant child rearing (i.e. child abuse). There are four basic elements that can shape successful parenting: responsiveness versus non-responsiveness and demanding versus undemanding. Baumrind's early work identified three parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive (Baumrind, 1971; 1978; 1991; McKay, 2006). Maccoby and Martin (1983) expanded these parenting styles into four categories involving a combination of demand and control versus acceptance and responsiveness. These four styles are referred to as authoritative (or reasoning), authoritarian, indulgent, and neglectful. Moreover, factors affecting parenting style include parent and child temperaments and culture

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