

PARENTING STYLE AND MALTREATMENT OF KENYAN CHILDREN IN MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

Ayiro L.

Maseno University, Kenya

Mbagaya C. V.

Maseno University, Kenya

Othuon L. A.

Maseno University, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Parents have a lasting impact on their children's growth and development. While child safe-guarding has been linked to healthy development, child maltreatment has been associated with negative long term consequences including child psychopathology. Research has shown that child maltreatment is a global problem and parents are the most common perpetrators. Globally, it is estimated that 25.3% of children experience some form of violence every day and almost one billion children are maltreated by their caregivers. In Kenya, it is approximated that at least 32% of males and 26% of females experience some form of maltreatment during childhood and a total of 12.1% of children present psychopathological related behavior. This study investigated the association between parenting style and child maltreatment among 330 Kenyan children aged between 7 and 10 years. Multi-stage and simple random sampling techniques were used to select the children and their parents. Cross-sectional research design and correlational analytic strategy was used. Data was

analyzed using descriptive statistics, paired sample t-test and hierarchical regression analysis. A total of 155 (52%) fathers and 140(48%) mothers drawn from 330 households completed the Conflict Tactics Scale and Parenting Style and Dimensions Questionnaires. Findings indicated that mothers maltreated their children more than did fathers; mothers ($M = 1.67$, $SD = .52$, $n = 107$) and fathers ($M = 1.51$, $SD = .52$, $n = 107$), $t = 2.72$, $df = 107$, $p = .01$. Mothers' and fathers' parenting style were predictors of child maltreatment ($\beta = .28$, $p = .00$) and ($\beta = .17$, $p = .04$) respectively. Specifically, mothers' parenting style was a predictor of physical assault ($\beta = .27$, $p = .00$) and psychological aggression ($\beta = .30$, $p = .00$) against their children. Fathers' parenting style was a predictor of psychological aggression ($\beta = .28$, $p = .00$). The results are discussed in the context of the Baumrind's Theory of parenting styles and dimensions. The study highlights the need to train parents on positive parenting to minimize the risk of maltreatment.

Key Words: *child maltreatment, middle childhood, parenting style*

INTRODUCTION

Extensive research has demonstrated the importance of parenting style in child development. This is because parents are the first social beings in children's lives. In sub-Saharan Africa, studies on child rearing are limited and little is known about the parenting practices in most low and middle income countries (Abubakar et al., 2013). In addition, little has been documented on parenting of children in middle childhood stage of development. According to Charlesworth, Wood and Viggiani (2007), at middle childhood children start to understand themselves and surrounding world. Middle childhood is a stage characterized by the developmental tasks of children seeking autonomy and competence. This is also the time when children separate from their parents and try to fit in with peers and teachers in school. Getting along with home and school environment can be a source of stress and behavioral changes. There is a likelihood of confrontations between parental expectations and child's needs, leading to parental harsh

discipline as they try to balance new schools' environment as well as home demands (Holden, 2010).

According to Baumrind (1971) there are two major characteristics of parenting: demanding/control and responsiveness/warmth. Based on the two characteristics, emerge three typologies of parenting styles. These are authoritarian, authoritative and permissive parenting styles. Authoritarian parenting style is characterized by little warmth, highly controlling behavior, over demanding, unresponsive and use strict, harsh disciplinary and punitive styles (Alizadeh, Talib, Abdullah & Mansor, 2011). Authoritative parents are warm and sensitive to children's needs. Although they are controlling, they permit their children freedom of expression (Steinberg & Silk, 2002). They set rules just like authoritarian parents do but are open to questioning, discussions and negotiations. Authoritative parents' demands are accompanied by responsible explanations which enable the child to accept limitations of actions (Bukatko & Daehler, 2011). Permissive parents are non-demanding and do not have control over their children. They rarely guide or punish their children but allow them to do whatever they want (Alizadeh, et al., 2011). These parents are not concerned about their children's behavior neither are they sensitive to their needs. They are, therefore, lax in discipline and do not wish to disappoint their children (Kopko, 2007).

Studies indicate that the level of control and responsiveness may be associated with different levels of discipline (Alizadeh et al., 2011). High controlling and less responsive parents are more likely to use harsh discipline as a form of power assertion and to ensure that children meet their high expectations. This may be a precursor to child's emotional abuse, physical maltreatment and/or neglect (Elizabeth & Halpenny, 2010). Unfortunately, child maltreatment does not enhance positive development in children. Previous studies have shown that child maltreatment is associated with negative long term consequences on child's growth and development (Bornstein, 2013; Mbagaya, Oburu, & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2013). These include: risk for psychopathology, child fatalities, poor academic performance, suicidal and risk-taking behaviors (De Young, Cicchetti & Rogosh, 2011).

Literature suggests that child rearing practices are shaped by implicit and explicit models of cultural beliefs and values related to parenting (Kane, 2005). This has led to controversies over the effectiveness of the parenting styles with some studies indicating that authoritative parenting is more effective than authoritarian and others arguing that both authoritarian and authoritative are effective in certain domains. For example, authoritative parenting styles has been linked to better child outcomes compared to authoritarian parenting styles in western samples (Fung, Li & Lam, 2017). On a different note, Akinsola (2013) argued that effectiveness of authoritarian and authoritative parenting depends on culture and developmental domain being assessed. The author posited that Chinese children who experienced authoritarian parenting did well in school as those who experienced authoritative parenting indicating that authoritative parenting style was not necessarily more beneficial than authoritarian. Grusec and Rudy (2006) also reported that

elevated levels of authoritarian parenting found in collectivists groups do not hold similar meaning as those in individualistic groups. Thus, although collectivist groups endorsed higher levels of authoritarianism than individualistic groups, use of authoritarian parenting style did not lead to lower scores on adaptive behavior and self-esteem among children of collectivists' parents when compared with children of individualistic parents. The purpose of this study therefore was to examine the relation between parenting style and child maltreatment. The findings may form a reference point for positive parenting programs in Kenya.

The reviewed studies indicate that there still remain cultural conflicts on what actually constitutes child maltreatment due to the cultural differences and beliefs about child rearing. This may hinder efforts put in place to address child maltreatment. For example, in African society, excessive time outs and spanking are not usually identified as maltreatment unless harm was identified (Lampien & Sexton-Radek, 2010). According to Onyango and Kattambo (2001) in African traditional society, children are highly valued and practices that many considered abusive are thought to protect them. For example, excessive or light punishment is seen as a sign of discipline to make children better persons. Last (2000) noted that in Sub-Saharan Africa, punishment is believed to aid the child to learn. The African proverbs such as 'if you don't make a child cry now you will cry later' (Wambuya, 2005) outlines traditional beliefs on child rearing. This denotes that African culture and parenting practices may act as an obstacle to child protection.

Lansford et al. (2005) and Bornstein, (2013) noted that authoritarian parenting style which emphasizes use of physical punishment is normative in Kenya and that mothers from rural villages emphasize that children should show high responsibility and obedience and would therefore punish those who were irresponsible. Oburu (2004) reported that 57% of the sample of Kenyan caregivers used slapping, tying with a rope, hitting, beating and kicking as forms of discipline. In the study, 36% of the caregivers used both physical punishment and reasoning and only 7% used reasoning without accompanying it with any physical discipline. The discipline strategies described by Oburu (2004) are abusive to children. The African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect ANPPCAN (2007) reported that physical assault and neglect of children were major forms of abuse in Kenya. In the year 2005/2006, 74% of all cases handled by the organization involved neglect and 20% involved physical abuse by parents.

A majority of the documented studies on parenting not only in Kenya but globally have focused on maternal responses (for example; Oburu, 2004; Lansford et al., 2005; Hirschy & Wilkson, 2010; UNICEF, 2012). Although fathers play a significant role in child development, they have been least represented in research involving children (Keown, 2011). In the current study we examined the relations between both fathers' and mothers' parenting style and child maltreatment. This may inform child maltreatment prevention and intervention programs.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

The study adopted a correlational design. This design allows a researcher to examine relationships between variables and if relationship is found, predict values for outcome variable from values of predictor variable (McBride, 2016). In this study, parenting style was the predictor variable and child maltreatment was the outcome variable. We therefore used correlational design to ascertain prediction of child maltreatment from parenting style.

Participants

The sample consisted of 330 children aged 7-10 (Mean age = 8.5) years from 330 households. A majority of parents 97(69%) mothers and 100(65%) had elementary (primary education) and a small percentage 40 (29%) mothers and 50(32%) had attained secondary education (see Table 1).

Table 1: Summary of Participants' Characteristics

Demographic Variables		M or %
Gender of children	Male	157(48%)
	Female	173(52%)
Parents	Mothers	140(48%)
	Fathers	155(52%)
Age	Minimum	7 years old
	Mean	8.5 years old
	Maximum	10 years old
Mother Education	not attended to school	2(1%)
	Elementary	97(69%)
	Secondary	40(29%)
	University	1(1%)
Father Education	not attended to school	3(2%)
	Elementary	100(65%)
	Secondary	50(32%)
	University	2(1%)

Study Area

This study was conducted in Bungoma, County, Kenya. The area is predominantly inhabited by the Bukusu sub-tribe of the Luhya community (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013). The economy of Bungoma County is mainly agricultural; sugar cane and maize farming. A recent report indicates that between 2006- 2016, Bungoma County recorded high cases of child abuse compared to other counties in rural areas in Kenya (Childline Report, 2017). The figures could be an underestimation of actual cases of child maltreatment in the county because of under reporting of incidences of maltreatment.

Measures

This study used Parenting Style and Dimensions Questionnaire, Parent-Child Conflict Tactics Scale and the Big Five Questionnaire for children. The instruments were piloted and validated for use in the study. In order to make the instruments useful, they were translated into Kiswahili language. This language is the national of the people of Kenya. Hence, the Kiswahili versions of these instruments were administered to the participants. The psychometric properties of these instruments are provided.

Parenting Styles and Dimension Questionnaire: Parenting style was measured by the 32-item Parenting Styles and Dimension Questionnaire (PSDQ-Short Version, Robinson, Mandlco, Olsen & Hart, 2001). This questionnaire assessed three dimensions of parenting styles: authoritarian, authoritative and permissive. Mothers rated how well the descriptions on the questionnaire fitted their parenting practices. The rating was done on a 5-point scale ranging from 1= never to 5=every time. Example of items on the questionnaire are; I use physical punishment as a way of disciplining my child (authoritarian), I explain to my child's how I feel about my child's good and bad behavior (authoritative), I find it difficult to discipline my child (permissive). The questionnaire has been found to be reliable in previous studies for example Robinson et al. (2001) reported the reliabilities for the dimensions as follows; authoritative ($\alpha = .86$), authoritarian ($\alpha = .82$), and permissive ($\alpha = .64$). The current study found the scales also to be reliable; authoritarian parenting style (mothers, $\alpha = .78$, fathers $\alpha = .71$); authoritative (mothers, $\alpha = .78$, fathers, $\alpha = .76$) and permissive (mothers, $\alpha = .28$, fathers, $\alpha = .24$). The low alpha level for permissive scale was attributed to the variety of items which measured different behaviors that were nonetheless indicators of permissiveness (see Straus, Hamblly, Finkelhor, Moore & Runyan, 1998).

Parent-Child Conflict Tactics Scale: Child maltreatment was measured using the 28 items Parent-Child Conflict Tactics Scale. This scale measures parenting practices associated with physical assault, child neglect and psychological maltreatment (Merbert, & Straus, 2002). Parents reported their maltreatment levels based on a 5-point scale ranging from 1= never to 5=every time. Straus et al (1998) found reliability of; ($\alpha = .55$) for physical assault scale, ($\alpha = .60$) for psychological aggression and ($\alpha = .22$) for neglect scale. For current study internal consistencies of the sub scales were; physical assault/maltreatment (mothers, $\alpha = .75$, fathers, $\alpha = .74$) psychological aggression (mothers, $\alpha = .72$, fathers, $\alpha = .66$) and neglect (mothers $\alpha = .57$, fathers $\alpha = .52$). Examples of the items include; when my child does something wrong I shake him/her (physical maltreatment), when my child does something wrong I yell, scream or shout at him/her (psychological maltreatment), I fail to ensure my child get food (neglect). Straus et al. (1998) who are authors of this scale have found that the neglect has low reliability in different studies. They attribute the low internal consistency reliability of the neglect scale to the diverse behaviors included in the measure such that, parents who engaged in one of the acts did not engage in the others.

Procedure

Maseno University Ethical and Review Committee approved the study. Permission to carry out the study was also granted by the office of the County Director of Education, Bungoma County. Children were given the opportunity to give or not give assent to participation. In view of the fact that children have many gate keepers, heads of schools, teachers and parents of participating children gave informed consent to participate in the study. Participants were given requisite information and adequate time to help them understand the study and to make decisions on consent or assent. All information obtained was treated with confidence and identities of participants were concealed. Dates for data collection were agreed upon with the head teachers, class teachers and parents of sampled children.

Data Analysis

Data from the questionnaires was coded and organized for analysis using IBM SPSS Version 21. Dimensional approach was used to classify subscales of parenting styles (authoritarian, authoritative and permissive), child maltreatment (physical assault, emotional maltreatment and neglect). Parents were categorized based on their dominant parenting style dimensions. Thereafter, the parenting style variable was transformed into ordinal scale in which authoritarian parenting was ranked high on demanding and control, followed by authoritative parenting style and the least on the scale was permissive parenting style and means derived for each dimension of parenting style. Children's scores on the forms of child maltreatment; physical assault, psychological aggression and neglect were computed by summing up their scores on individual items of the subscales and means derived for each form of maltreatment. Later, a composite score (total maltreatment) was computed by summing up the forms of maltreatment. Mean scores of the forms of child maltreatment were computed and compared. Low mean scores indicated low levels of maltreatment and high mean scores suggested high levels of maltreatment. Hierarchical regression analyses were used to determine the relation between parenting style and child maltreatment. Alpha level was set at, $p < .05$.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Parenting Style for Children in Middle childhood

The study found that 48 (33.79%) of the mothers were authoritative, 45(32.41%) permissive and 44(31.72%) authoritarian. The least dominant was undifferentiated parenting style which did not fit in any of the three styles with only 3(2.07%) of mothers using it. An almost equal number of fathers practiced either predominantly authoritarian 56(36.13%) or authoritative 54 (34.84%) parenting styles. Those who used permissive parenting style were 42 (27.10%) and only 3(1.94%) were undifferentiated in parenting styles. The findings implied that authoritarian parenting style was dominant among fathers and authoritative among mothers.

Levels of Maltreatment of Children in Middle Childhood

Mothers physically maltreated ($M = 1.67$, $SD = .49$) their children more than did fathers ($M = 1.50$, $SD = .35$), $t = 3.51$, $df = 107$, $p = .00$. There was no significant difference in psychological maltreatment of children by mothers ($M = 2.02$, $SD = .98$) and fathers ($M = 1.79$, $SD = .74$), $t = 1.95$, $df = 107$, $p = .05$. There were also no significant difference in neglect of children by mothers ($M = 1.32$, $SD = .53$) and fathers ($M = 1.23$, $SD = .44$), $t = 1.32$, $df = 107$, $p = .19$.

A composite score child maltreatment was derived from a summation of physical assault/maltreatment, psychological aggression/emotional maltreatment and child neglect scores. This study found that mothers maltreated their children more than did fathers; mothers ($M = 1.67$, $SD = .52$, $n = 107$) and fathers ($M = 1.51$, $SD = .52$, $n = 107$), $t = 2.72$, $df = 107$, $p = .01$. These results imply that generally, mothers maltreated children more than did fathers.

Association between Parenting Style and Child Maltreatment

Analyses were done to determine the relation between mothers' and fathers' parenting style and forms of child maltreatment; physical assault, psychological/emotional maltreatment and neglect. Hierarchical regression analyses were computed after controlling for gender of child, education level of parent and family income. In step 1, gender of children, parents' education level and family income were entered and in step 2, either physical maltreatment/assault, emotional maltreatment/psychological aggression or neglect were entered. Analyses for fathers and mothers were done separately. Results based on maternal parenting are presented in Table 2.

Results in Table 2 showed that mothers' education levels, gender of the children, income of the family and parenting style together accounted for 11% of the variance in physical assault, 12% in psychological aggression/maltreatment and 1% of variance in neglect scores. After controlling for mothers' education, gender of child and family income, parenting style by mothers was significantly associated with physical assault/maltreatment $\beta = .27$ ($p = .00$). This implied that the higher the levels of demanding and control by mothers, the higher their level of physical assault/maltreatment of children by. The prediction of psychological aggression/maltreatment by mothers' parenting style was also significant $\beta = .30$ ($p = .00$). This meant that mothers who reported high scores on demanding and control also reported higher scores on psychological aggression/maltreatment of their children. The association between parenting style by mothers and child neglect was not significant. This implied that mothers' demand and control was not a risk factor to child neglect. The prediction of forms of child maltreatment by parenting style by mothers, therefore, imply that increase in mothers' demand and control was a predictor of psychological aggression /emotional maltreatment and physical assault/maltreatment of children.

Table 2: Prediction of Forms of Child Maltreatment from Mothers’ Parenting Style

Child Maltreatment		R	R ²	R ² <i>change</i>	F <i>change</i>	Df	Beta	p
Physical Mal	<i>Step1</i>	.19	.04	.04	1.72	3(136)		
	Education						-.15	.11
	Gender						-.02	.78
	Income						-.04	.67
	<i>Step 2</i>	.33	.11	.07	11.25	1(135)		
Parenting style						.27	.00	
Emotion Mal	<i>Step1</i>	.18	.03	.03	1.48	3(136)		
	Education						-.14	.13
	Gender						.04	.63
	Income						.07	.48
	<i>Step 2</i>	.34	.12	.09	13.01	1(135)		
Parenting style						.30	.00	
Neglect	<i>Step1</i>	.22	.05	.05	2.21	3(136)		
	Education						-.14	.11
	Gender						-.14	.16
	Income						-.09	.35
	<i>Step 2</i>	.22	.05	.01	4.13	1(135)		
Parenting style						-.04	.62	

p<.05

Note. Betas are derived from final block of the regression model

We went further and computed the association between fathers’ parenting style and each of the forms of child maltreatment was also computed (see Table 3).

Results showed that fathers’ education level, gender of the children and family income and parenting style by fathers accounted for 11% in psychological aggression/maltreatment scores. In addition, parenting style by fathers was a predictor of psychological aggression/ emotional maltreatment $\beta=.28$ ($p=.00$). This means that fathers who are high in demanding and control also use high levels of emotional/psychological maltreatment. Similar to mothers, there was no association between demand and control and child neglect. Unlike mothers’ demand and control, there was no significant association between level of control and demand and physical assault/maltreatment of children.

Further, two hierarchical regression analyses were performed to determine the prediction of total child maltreatment from mothers’ and fathers’ parenting style separately. Mothers’ or fathers’ level of education, family income and gender of children were controlled for in step one of the regression model. In step 2, mothers’ and fathers’ parenting style was entered as the predictor variable. Findings of prediction of child maltreatment from mothers’ and fathers’ parenting style are presented in Table 4.

Table 3: Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Forms of Child Maltreatment from Parenting Style by Fathers

		R	R ²	R ² _{change}	F _{change}	Df	Beta	P
Physical Maltreatment	<i>Step1</i>	.22	.05	.05	2.38	3(144)		
	Education						-.16	.09
	Gender						-.09	.29
	Income						-.05	.59
	<i>Step 2</i>	.25	.06	.02	2.43	1(143)		
	Parenting style						.13	.12
Psychological Maltreatment	<i>Step1</i>	.18	.03	.03	1.61	3(144)		
	Education						-.11	.24
	Gender						-.04	.61
	Income						-.05	.59
	<i>Step 2</i>	.33	.11	.08	12.01	1(143)		
	Parenting style						.28	.00
Neglect	<i>Step1</i>	.15	.02	.02	1.12	3(144)		
	Education						-.13	.17
	Gender						-.10	.24
	Income						-.03	.75
	<i>Step 2</i>	.18	.03	.01	1.31	1(143)		
	Parenting style						-.10	.25

p<.05

Note: Betas are derived from the final block of the regression model

Table 4: Summary of Regression Analysis Examining Prediction of Child Maltreatment from Mothers' and Fathers' Parenting Style

	R	R ²	R ² _{change}	F _{change}	Df	Beta	P
<i>Mothers</i>							
<i>Step1</i>	.21	.05	.05	2.15	3(136)		
Mothers education						-.18	.05
Gender						-.03	.69
Monthly Income						-.00	.96
<i>Step 2</i>	.35	.12	.08	11.69	1(135)		
Parenting style						.28	.00
<i>Fathers</i>							
<i>Step1</i>	.24	.06	.06	2.85	3(144)		
Fathers education						-.17	.07
Gender						-.09	.26
Monthly Income						-.06	.54
<i>Step 2</i>	.29	.08	.03	4.13	1(143)		
Parenting style						.17	.04

The covariates; mothers' education level, gender of children, monthly income of the family and parenting style accounted for 12% of the variance in child maltreatment score. Mothers' education level, gender of the children and family monthly income variables did not predict child maltreatment. This study showed that mothers' parenting style was significantly associated with child maltreatment ($\beta=.28$, $p=.00$) (see Table 4).

In regression analysis with fathers' parenting style as a predictor, fathers' education level, gender of children, monthly income of the family and parenting style accounted for 8% of the variance in child maltreatment score. Similar to mothers, the covariates; fathers' education levels, gender of the children and family monthly income variables did not predict child maltreatment. Fathers' parenting style by fathers was significantly associated with child maltreatment ($\beta=.17$, $p=.04$) (see Table 4).

The results implied that regardless of parents' education level, children's gender and family monthly income whereas mothers' and fathers' demand and control was a predictor of child maltreatment.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study showed that both authoritarian and authoritative were most common parenting styles by mothers and fathers. This could have been due to perceived importance of these parenting styles; authoritarian parenting could have been used to enhance parental authority while authoritative parenting style likely indicates that Kenyan parents could be embracing positive parenting strategies that are being advocated for globally. Due to changing norms as a result of globalization, it is also possible that Kenyan parents are adopting less physical discipline which could escalate into assault. The current study confirms Oburu (2011) suggestion that Kenyan parents were influenced by loyalty to traditional norms and complexities associated with modernity which further alter and superimpose foreign lifestyles into traditional beliefs about parenting. The findings also concur with Wandende, Fiten and Lasser (2014) who postulated that parenting in Kenya is dynamic and responsive; maintaining a traditional element while simultaneously adapting to modern times.

The study's hypothesis that mothers' and fathers' demand and control was a predictor of child maltreatment by was confirmed. Previous scholars have also reported significant associations between parenting style and child maltreatment. For example, Eden and Rodriguez (2007) found that harsh parenting which is characterized by very high demands and control was related to child maltreatment among children aged 7-12 years. The findings are also in convergence with Baumrind (1971) Parenting Style and Dimension Theory. According to Baumrind, authoritarian parents are more controlling and more likely to use harsh punishment; authoritative parents balance control and demanding and are average in discipline and responsiveness while permissive parents have low level of demanding and high level of responsiveness and are less

likely to discipline their children. Similar to the current study, parents' high level of demand and control was a risk factor to child maltreatment.

Studies indicate that generally, children spend more time with their mothers than fathers. Bornstein (2013) reported that mothers normally play a central role in child rearing and are more investigated comprehensively than fathers because fathers' involvement is lower than mothers. Furthermore, in Western Kenya, where this research was also carried out, Oburu (2011) reported that mothers were more involved in child rearing and discipline compared to fathers. In current study, we found that mothers maltreated children, especially physical assault more than did fathers. The non-significant association between fathers' parenting style and physical assault/maltreatment could therefore be as a result of the fewer incidence fathers make use of physical assault related practices compared to mothers. This could be attributed to less time fathers spend with children compared to mothers. It is possible that they comply with fathers' demands for the short period they interact. Gershoff (2002) also found that parenting practices associated with high demand and control was associated with short term compliance of children.

The association between parenting style and psychological aggression/emotional maltreatment in current study is similar to a previous study by Rodriguez (2010). The study found that parents' high demand and control was significantly associated with psychological aggression.

CONCLUSIONS

Despite the limitations, findings of this study presented evidence in support of the fact that fathers' as well as mothers' demand and control is a risk factor of child maltreatment. The study also suggested that demanding and controlling mothers and fathers would most likely psychologically maltreat children than neglect them. In addition, whereas high demand and control by mothers was a risk factor for physical assault of children, it had no association with physical assault of children by fathers.

IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

This study contributes towards a better understanding of maternal and paternal parenting styles and child maltreatment. This may form a framework for developing positive parenting programs for fathers and mothers. In addition, mothers and fathers need to be targeted in prevention and intervention programs. The results suggest that interventions need to focus on covert forms of maltreatment for example psychological aggression that is likely to be used by both fathers and mothers.

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