

Parents' Psychological Versus Physical Aggression Toward Children: Which is Related More Strongly to Children's Behaviour Problems?

Urmila Pillay* and Jennifer E Lansford**

Abstract

Parental disciplining plays an important role in contributing to internalizing and externalizing behaviour in children. However, the effect of disciplining could vary with culture. There is a dearth of studies examining this relationship between parental disciplining and children's externalizing and internalizing behaviour among children in India. The aim of the current study was to look at how disciplining practices of physically aggressive, psychologically aggressive and non violent methods contribute to internalizing and externalizing behaviour in children in the state of Kerala, India. A sample of 219 families were interviewed. Questionnaires used were Frequency of disciplining techniques and Child Behaviour Checklist and Youth Self-Report. Psychologically aggressive method of disciplining played an important role in contributing to Internalizing and externalizing behaviour over and above the role of physically aggressive punishment. Psychologically aggressive disciplining by parents should be considered while assessing and intervening children's externalizing and / or internalizing behaviour.

Key words: Aggression, behavioral problems

*Specialist Clinical Psychologist, West London Mental Health Trust, UK

**Research Professor, Center for Child and Family Policy, Duke University, Durham, NC 27708, U.S.A