Concurrent & Longitudinal Associations between Preschool Parenting and Child Psychopathology: Does Exposure to Different Types of Adversity Play a Role?

Numerous theories have stressed the importance of parenting in development of child psychopathology. Despite the well-established concurrent associations between parenting and child psychological disorders, the longitudinal relationships, especially cross-stage ones, are still inconclusive. In addition, research has shown that parental influences are amplified for children with adversity experiences. On top of that, recently, the Dimensional Model of Adversity and Psychopathology illustrates the importance of identifying distinct dimension of adversity (threat & deprivation). Therefore, the current study investigated the concurrent and longitudinal impacts of parenting on child psychopathology and the moderating role of different types of adversity exposure. At baseline when children were 2-5 years, multi-method measures were used to measure children's overall psychopathology, parenting behaviors, and exposure to adversity. After 14 years, the participants, now in late adolescence, were re-contacted and 133 adolescents completed self-report measure of psychopathology by the time of data analysis. The results showed that more negative preschool parenting behaviors were significantly associated with higher levels of preschool overall psychopathology but not adolescent internalizing, externalizing, or overall psychopathology. Exposure to threat, deprivation, or other adversities did not significantly moderate the associations examined above. Our study adds to the limited literature in cross-stage parental influences by further questioning whether parents play a crucial role in the development of adolescent psychopathology. It implies that future studies should consider the significance of parenting with caution and identify other factors contributing to psychopathology risk in adolescents.