Predictors of parenting stress in parents of children with developmental disabilities: Parent, child, demographic variables

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Parents of children with developmental disabilities report more parenting stress compared to parents of children who are typically developing (Dyson, 1997).

Higher levels of stress are associated with negative effects to parents themselves, children and other family members such as parental depression, negative parent-child interaction, and maladjustment of family members (Plant, & Sanders, 2007).

However, not all parents of children with developmental disabilities experience extremely high level of parenting stress (Singer, & Farkas, 1989). Many studies were examined which variables could lower the level of parenting stress. Several studies focused on perceived social support, coping strategy, maternal self-efficacy. In addition, child problem behavior has been found to relate to elevated parenting stress (Baker, McIntyre, Blacher, Crnic, Edelbrock, & Low, 2003). Some demographic variables, such as gender, mother’s job status and economic status, could differentiate parenting stress (Emerson, 2003).

Because having a child with developmental disabilities is challenging, the intervention should focus on reducing parenting stress instead of eliminating stress. The purpose of this study was to examine the most powerful predictors among three domains (parent, child, and demographic variables). In addition, this study examined the predictors which distinguish stress level come under clinical range from non clinical range.

METHOD

Participants. 135 parents of children (112 boys, 23 girls) aged 2-12 years who were diagnosed with developmental disabilities were participated in this study.

Measures.  
Information sheet Parents provide their child’s age, gender and their economic status.  
Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) 55 items are common to both CBCL aimed at the children and pre-school years.  
Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) Perceived social support was assessed using MSPSS.  
The ways of Coping Checklist) Two types of coping strategies (Problem-focused and emotion-focused) were assessed by the ways of coping checklist.  
Maternal self-efficacy Perceived parenting self-efficacy was assessed.

RESULTS

Hierarchical binary regression analyses were conducted to determine which domain (demographic, child, parent variable) predicted parenting stress level (clinical, non-clinical). The demographic variables, gender of child, age of child, economic situation, were entered in the first block, followed by problem behavior in the second block. In third block, perceived social support, two types of coping strategies and maternal self-efficacy were entered. All Three blocks were significant. Among them, the final block with three blocks were most significant. Nagelkerke $R^2 = .34$, $\chi^2_{model} (8, N = 135) = 53.10, p<.001$. The variables in the model that predicted best clinically significant parenting stress were economic status (Wald = 5.39, $p < .05$), social support (Wald =7.86, $p < .01$), emotion-focused coping strategy (Wald = 7.55, $p < .01$), and maternal self-efficacy (Wald = 10.14, $p < .01$). In general, being higher economic status, having social support, using emotion-focused coping strategy and being more efficacious in parenting predicted extremely higher parenting stress.

<table>
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<th>Step</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
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<th>Wald</th>
<th>Odds Ratio</th>
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<td>.15</td>
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<td>Problem behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Social Support</td>
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</table>
| 3    | .21   | Parent | Coping strategy | 7.75 | .06 ^
|      |       |         | Problem-focused | 7.95 | .05 ^
|      |       |         | Emotion-focused | 7.95 | .05 ^
|      |       |         | Maternal self-efficacy | 10.14 | .05 ^

Figure 1. Hierarchical binary logistic regression analyses

DISCUSSION

Economic status, social support, emotion-focused coping strategy and maternal self-efficacy variables have shown to be spowerful predictors to parenting stress of parents with developmental disabilities. The most interesting finding of this study was that parent domain predicted parenting stress more than demographic and child domain. These results could apply to effective intervention for parents who are under parenting stress by focusing on parent side.

REFERENCES


