

Original article**Study of Parenting Styles and Attachment in Adolescents with Dissociative Disorder**

Khush Ada, Pooja Mahour, Vivek Agrawal, Amit Arya, Sujit Kumar Kar

Address for correspondence: Department of Psychiatry, King George's Medical University, Lucknow, U.P, India. **Email:** poojapsy@gmail.com

Abstract

Background: Several studies have suggested that parenting style and attachment patterns affects the development of the child eventually psychological wellbeing of the child also may affect. Several studies have focused on the qualitative aspects of the parent-child relationship as a vulnerability factor in adult psychopathology. However, such studies in dissociative disorder are less studied in Indian population. This study was planned to explore and find the relationship between parenting styles and attachment in adolescents with dissociative disorder.

Method: The sample consisted N=40 adolescent diagnosed with Dissociative Disorder(all types),aged 13-18 years and both their parents. Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaires and Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment tools were used.

Results: Most of the mothers followed permissive parenting style, while father's followed authoritative parenting style. On attachment dimensions, adolescents perceived significantly greater trust, improve communication with their mothers and more alienated with fathers. Correlation between parenting and attachment reveals significant positive relationship between permissive parenting of mothers and overall attachment with father, authoritarian mother and trust in father. Significant negative relationship found between authoritative parenting and

perceived alienation with mother, authoritarian mother and overall attachment with mother, authoritarian father and overall attachment with father.

Conclusions: Both the parents use different parenting style with Dissociative adolescent and both Parenting and attachment affect each other, with regards to specific variable.

Keywords: Dissociative Disorder, Parenting Styles, Attachment

Introduction

Dissociative disorder is a stress related disorder. Dissociative disorders are characterized by disruptions of awareness, memory, identity, or perception. Adolescence is the transition period from youth to maturity; a phase that brings sometimes turbulent physical, social, and emotional changes and they carry proneness for development of dissociative phenomenon. The prevalence of dissociative phenomenon was found to be as high as 4.9% in adolescents [1] Symptoms may be as high as 23 to 45% among inpatients setting [2].

Baumrind has mentioned the risk of developing dissociative symptoms influenced grossly by the parenting factors, maltreatment and impaired parent child relationships. Parent-child relationship becomes a major determinant of the child's development and eventual psychological health in adulthood. Baumrind described some specific parenting styles and nature of rearing; first kind of which is Authoritarian parents- these are those parents who are highly controlling authority and rely heavily on punishment but are not responsive. Second are Authoritative parents- They are those parents who are warm and communicate well with their children; they are both demanding and responsive. Third style is Permissive/Indulgent parents are those who are affectionate and accepting but they do not interfere with their children's creativity and independence [3]. In a study, based on parenting styles, anxiety, depersonalization and coping behavior in adolescents it was found that parental psychological pressure correlated positively with depersonalization and

trait anxiety among the adolescents. The group of authoritarian parenting style showed higher scores on depersonalization and anxiety while the highest score on active problem coping was seen in groups of authoritative and permissive style of parents [4]. Another study showed the relationship between permissive parenting and formation of identity diffusion and also with premature identity [5].

Different behaviors of parents might affect the child's pattern of attachment, which was defined as attachment styles. British psychologist, John Bowlby described attachment as a "lasting psychological connectedness between human beings"[6]. Ainsworth explained three major types of attachment: secure attachment, avoidant-insecure attachment and ambivalent-insecure attachment [7]. In 1986, Main and Solomon added a fourth attachment style naming it disorganized-insecure attachment [8]. Each attachment style has its own specific representation. Peter Barach [9] emphasized that emotional neglect or detached responses from parents, leads to chronic psychological detachment and dissociation in those who later goes on to develop dissociative identity disorder (DID). He also emphasized how such neglectful and detached parental responses can lead to failures but protect young children from the impact of severe trauma occurring later in life [9]. Choon et al. studied the relationships between parental, peer attachment and delinquency among adolescents, the results revealed significant level of negative relationship between father and mother attachment with adolescent's delinquency and significant level of positive relationship between peer attachments with adolescent's delinquency [10]. Attachment insecurities (both anxious and avoidant varieties) are associated with various stress related problems (depression [11], anxiety [12], obsessive-compulsive disorder [13], post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) [14], suicidal tendencies [15], and eating disorders [16].

Above reviewed literature has suggested that parenting styles and attachment are confounding factors for different psychopathology. It is therefore important to study them in dissociative disorder as well. In India, there is scarcity of researches on this issue. Therefore, the present study was designed (1) to explore the type of parenting style in parents having adolescents with dissociative disorder and what kind of attachment an adolescent perceives with both the parents (2) to find out the relationship between parenting styles and attachment in adolescents with dissociative disorder.

Methods

This is a cross sectional study which used purposive sampling method for sample selection in Department of Psychiatry, King George's Medical University, Lucknow. Ethical approval was taken from the research ethical committee of the university, Sample included all newly registered adolescent patients between the age group of 13-18 years attending psychiatric OPD who were diagnosed with Dissociative Disorder (all types) as per ICD-10 and were living with both biological parents. Informed consents had been obtained from the parents and assents had been obtained from the patients. Patients and parents having any other co-morbid psychiatric disorder or physical disorder or conditions requiring priory medical management, those who lived with step parents or single parents and those who were mentally retarded were excluded from the study. Also parents, who were not willing to participate or having significant medical co-morbidity that makes them difficult to participate in the interview; were excluded. All the details of the selected patients were recorded on semi-structured proforma. Parenting style was assessed by using the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire –Short Version (PSDQ-Short Version) [17]. It is a 32-item instrument for parents. The questionnaire assesses parenting styles of Baumrind's well-known typologies of authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting

based on a "five point Likert scale ranging from never (1) to always (5). The English PSDQ-Short Version has adequate internal consistency and relatively high reliability and has been validated cross-culturally [17].

Attachment was assessed by using Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) (parent section) on adolescents [18]. This tool has been developed to measure the perception of the adolescents with regard to their relation with their parents in terms of positive and negative affective/ cognitive dimensions. It has three major dimensions (degree of mutual trust, quality of communication, extent of anger and alienation). This is a self-report questionnaire with five point Likert rating (1=Never true to 5= Always true). These instruments were translated in Hindi and back translation was done. Tools were clinician assisted.

Statistical analysis: Data was summarized as percentage, mean and standard Deviation (SD). Categorical groups were compared by chi-square (χ^2) test and correlation was seen for continuous variables by Pearson correlation by using statistical software- statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) version 16.0.

Results

The current study was intended to explore the attachment and parenting style in adolescents with dissociative disorder, for which a total of 62 patients were screened; out of which 22 patients were excluded, co-morbid illness, low IQ/ retardation were most prevalent reasons of which. Hence only 40 patients and their parents were further taken up for the study.

Table-1 is depicting the clinical and demographic details of the study population. Rest of the major demographic details of the parents were suggestive of that mother's mean age was 39.35 ± 7.2 , while fathers mean age was 44.07 ± 7.7 . Most of the mothers were uneducated 12 (30%) and were housewife (82%).

Table-1: Socio Demographic and clinical Profile of study sample (N = 40)

Socio Demographic Profile		Number Of Cases (N=40)	Percentage (%)
Age (years) Range: 13-18	<i>Mean ± SD:</i>		14.55± 1.89
Gender	Male	9	22.5
	Female	31	77.5
Domicile	Rural	23	57.5
	Urban	17	42.5
Education*	Up to 5 th	1	2.5
	6 th to 8 th	17	42.5
	10 th	14	35
	12 th & above	8	20
Family Income** (rupees/month)	Up to 5000	14	35
	5001-10000	12	30
	>10000	14	35
Family Type	Joint	16	40
	Nuclear	24	60
Religion	Hindu	38	95
	Muslim	2	5
Duration of illness (Month) <i>Mean ± SD</i>			16.18 ± 26.85
IQ* **	Borderline (70-79)		3 7.5
	Dull Normal (80-89)		5 12.5
	Average (90-110)		32 80
Family History of psychiatric illness	Present	1 st degree relatives (siblings)	4 10
		2 nd degree (relatives)	5 12.5
	Absent		31 77.5
Substance use in family (<i>Occasional</i>)	Present	14	35
	Absent	26	65
F44.3 Trance and possession disorders		2	5
F44.7 Mixed dissociative type [conversion]		38	95

*Census (2011), **Socio economic and caste census (2011), *** Wechsler (1997)

While most fathers were educated up to 10th class i.e. 35% and 60% were farmers or laborers. Clinical profile of the study sample shows that psychiatric illness in the family in first degree (other than parents) include bipolar disorder in two families, dissociative disorder in one family

and schizophrenia in another. With reference to second degree relatives, except 1 family rest of other 4 families were nuclear families, which might not have direct effect neither on parenting nor adolescent's perception of attachment towards the parents.

Table-2: Comparison of parenting style of parents of study subjects using Parenting Style and Dimensions Questionnaire

Parenting Styles	Mother (N=40) N (%)	Father (N=40) N (%)	χ^2
Authoritative	9 (22.5)	17(42.5)	8.51*
Authoritarian	4 (10)	9 (22.5)	
Permissive	27 (67.5)	14(32.5)	

Level of significance *P <0.05

Table-3: Comparison of attachment variables of study subjects with their parents using Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment

Attachment Variables	Mother(N=40)	Father(N=40)	χ^2
Trust	28 (70%)	12 (30%)	21.7***
Communication	33 (82.5%)	7 (17.5%)	
Alienation	17(42.5%)	23 (57.5%)	
Total score	34 (85%)	6 (15%)	

Level of significance ***p<0.001

Negative correlation was found between mother's authoritative parenting style and alienation, authoritarian parenting style with fathers trust and mothers total attachment. Another negative correlation was found between father's authoritarian parenting style and total attachment. A positive correlation was found between father's permissive parenting style and total attachment.

Table-4: Correlation of parenting style with attachment

	Trust (M)	Com (M)	Alien (M)	Trust (F)	Com (F)	Alien (F)	Total Attachment (M)	Total Attachment (F)
Mother (Authoritative)	-0.14	-0.105	-0.33*	-0.079	-0.074	0.214	-0.18	0.076
Mother (Authoritarian)	-0.297	-0.27	0.004	0.356*	0.093	0.012	-0.36*	0.283
Mother (Permissive)	0.113	0.214	-0.159	0.234	0.036	-0.16	-0.042	0.274
Father (Authoritative)	-0.215	0.158	-0.219	-0.036	0.117	-0.21	-0.112	0.222
Father (Authoritarian)	0.146	0	0.101	-0.232	-0.089	0.22	-0.155	-0.435**
Father (Permissive)	-0.115	0.106	-0.058	0.31	0.122	-0.30	-0.025	0.444**

$P < .05^*$, $P < .001^{**}$

Discussion

The present study aimed to explore the relationship between parenting styles and attachment in adolescents with dissociative disorder. Family environment do play a role in dissociative disorder. Understanding the role of parenting and attachment style in these patients may help the clinicians in planning the therapeutic intervention. We planned this study, as adolescence is the formative period of an individual, parental style and attachment related factors need to be understood in relation to dissociative disorder.

In the present study, majority of patients were females and from a rural background indicating female preponderance which is also depicted in Indian studies which says that maximum number of psychiatric diagnoses was of dissociative disorder happening in females of rural background

suggesting this to be one of the common psychiatric disorder among adolescent females in rural India [19,20]. In our study, it was seen that common parenting style of mothers was permissive style followed by authoritative style and authoritarian parenting style. In comparison to the parenting style of mothers, fathers were more authoritative, followed by being permissive in their parenting style and very few followed authoritarian style of parenting. We had assessed the parenting style as per the view of the parents about their style of parenting. Evidences suggest that there may be difference in perception between parents and children about parenting style [19]. Parents perceive their parenting style to be more authoritative, whereas adolescents adjudge it as either more permissive or authoritarian type [19]. Evidences from Western countries suggest that by the time adolescence, parental influence and involvement declines [20], however in developing countries like India, parental influence still persists during the adolescence. Authoritative parenting style is found to be associated with achievement in adolescents as evident from Western literature [20,21,] however it's generalisability is questionable considering cultural differences in the perception regarding parenting styles.

In the current study adolescents of dissociative disorder are reared by two different styles of parenting. Parenting styles of both the parents were calculated to be significantly different .On one hand mothers are more permissive, as literature on permissive parents suggested that they being responsive and not much demanding, lenient, allow considerable self directive and avoid conflict [22,23]. Children of such permissive parents receive a high degree of freedom. They set their own goals and rules with little or no guidance from parents. This style of parenting is associated with negative outcomes because of parents neglecting and avoiding attitude [24]. Children reared by permissive parenting leads to increased anxiety levels and internalizing disorders [25].

On the other hand, fathers are authoritative in their parenting styles which means, they are both demanding as well as responsive. They monitor and instruct clear principles for their child's behavior; they are firm, but not intrusive and restrictive. Their disciplinary methods are supportive [23]. Children reared by authoritative parenting from fathers become cheerful, responsible, self-reliant and cooperative. Baumrind's [23] research found adolescents of authoritative parents had higher self-esteem and greater social confidence. They are less likely to be involved in antisocial behaviour.

The reason for differences in parenting styles could be gender roles set by the socio-cultural milieu. The socio-cultural milieu largely affects the maternal and paternal roles and control which was highlighted in previous studies where they concluded control of mother figure gives the feeling of security and approval to Indian adolescents [26]. In India more emphasis is given on compliance, respect for elders and social inter-dependence [26, 27]. This distinction in parenting might be a stress for the adolescent, In literature this is also identified that when the parenting style was perceived stressful by the adolescents, it might be resulting in development of trait anxiety and depersonalization, whereas when there is perceived warmth in the parenting, it helps in active coping [28]. Low IQ may also become a significant contributing factor in poor adjustment and understanding, in the current study 20% of the sample population has low level of intelligence Previous literature has also suggested that children with dissociative disorder with poor cognitive ability results in ineffective coping with stress.[29]

The analysis of attachment variables in our study suggest that (70%) adolescents trusted and (82.5%) openly communicated with their mothers as compared to fathers. However, alienation variable indicates that patients felt alienated with their fathers as compared to mothers. It could be interpreted that as the adolescents trust and communication was more with mothers and more

alienation with fathers. The study sample was securely attached with mothers (85%) and insecurely attached with fathers. The data was further analyzed using chi-square, the analysis of which shows a significant difference between the two groups of parent on the attachment modality ($p < 0.001$). The results of this domain was consistent with a study done by Chavez (2011), where he found people with higher dissociative tendencies were more likely to have greater differences between parent attachments [30]. Barach found out insecure attachment to be in the etiology of dissociative disorder [9].

Although this is a well-known fact that attachment and parenting both stands on one platform however there is big paucity of literature which had shown the relational analysis or the prediction analysis in respect to dissociation attachment pattern and the parenting of these adolescents, thus this study could be one of the pioneer study for reflecting this crucial connections between different parenting styles in relation to components of attachment.

In the current study the relationship of parenting style with attachment showed a significant negative correlation between mothers' authoritative and mothers' alienation domain. This finding suggests that as the mothers become more authoritative in their parenting style, adolescents feel more alienated towards them. Our findings are in contrary to the findings of an earlier study which found positive association between authoritative parenting styles and secure attachment style [31]. A significant positive correlation existed between mothers authoritarian parenting style with fathers trust, which was suggesting that adolescent's trust on their fathers increased, when mothers were more authoritarian Negative correlation was also found between mother's authoritarian parenting style and mother's total attachment, indicating that when mothers were authoritarian, adolescents felt less attached or insecurely attached to their mothers. In addition to this, fathers' authoritarian parenting style was found to be negatively correlated

with fathers' overall attachment; it indicates that when fathers were authoritarian, adolescents did not have secure attachment with their fathers which is also supported by previous study, authoritarian style would violate the condition of trust and open communication, leading to impairment of synchrony and attunement in the adolescent-parent relationship (considered important in building trust) [31]. Another positive correlation existed between father's permissive parenting style and total attachment which explains that fathers permissiveness increase the total attachment with their children i.e. adolescents are securely attached to those fathers who are permissive.

Galambos et al. [32] and Gorrese & Ruggieri, [33] in their study found those adolescents trust more on an authoritative father than a permissive father. Only adolescents parented in the authoritative parenting style, experienced higher levels of coherence in communication with mother and father, compared to the authoritarian parenting style. Those adolescents parented in the authoritative parenting style also communicated with father in a more open manner, than adolescents who were parented in the permissive or undifferentiated parenting style.

Following are limitations as we cannot generalize the findings of the current study with this small sample size, lack of comparison with a control group is another limitation of this study, and no sub types of dissociation being segregated in current study which can be further analyzed in future studies. The causal association of parenting style or attachment with dissociative disorder was not evaluated in this study. Intellectual or cognitive functioning has not been studied in detail which can be one of the contributing factors of adjustment with stress. A prospective research design may establish the causal association. Parenting style is measured by self-rated scale, where possibility of subjective bias cannot be avoided. In future study cross evaluation by spouse can give more accurate parenting information.

To conclude, among the adolescents with dissociative disorder, the common parenting style of their mothers is permissive /indulgent type while fathers follow authoritative parenting style. There is significant relationship between parenting style and attachment pattern. There is significant relationship between parenting style and attachment pattern however not all the parameter but in specific type of parenting style and attachment patterns. The findings of the study would help in intervention and psychoeducating the parents of children with this disorder.

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Khush Ada, Clinical Psychologist, In DMHP Bareilly, U.P., India; Pooja Mahour, Associate Professor cum Child Psychologist; Vivek Agrawal, Professor of Child and Adolescents Psychiatry; Amit Arya, Associate Professor of Child and Adolescents Psychiatry; Sujit Kumar Kar, Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Department of Psychiatry at KGMU, UP, Lucknow, India.