

Research of early childhood regulation difficulties in the Hungarian “For Healthy Offspring” project

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Introduction:

The ‘FOR HEALTHY OFFSPRING’ project was the first Hungarian research examining the prevalence of behaviour regulation problems in early childhood and the significance of different risk and protective factors behind them.

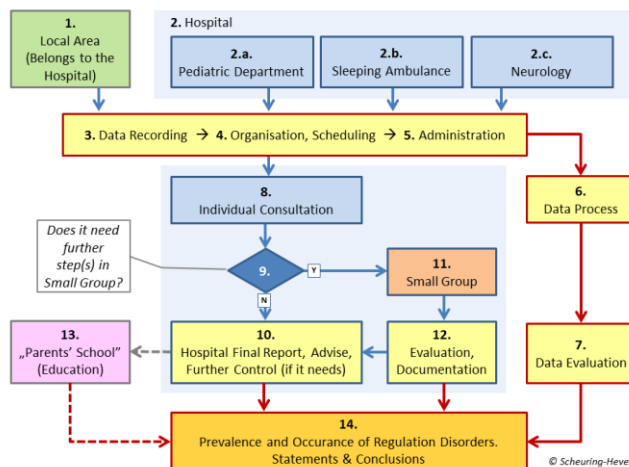
Methods:

Families with 0-3 year-old children were included in the project from the Heim Pál Children Hospital and from local areas. Data were collected using questionnaires, diagnostic assessments and consultations.

Questionnaires included detailed questions about the parents’ socio-economic status, medical and psychological performance of the pregnancy and delivery, medical state and behaviour of the child, and classical regulation (crying, feeding, sleeping) problems. Validated instruments were also used for measuring parents’ emotions towards and perceptions about their child (H-MORS-SF), temperament of the children (IBQ-R, ECBQ), parents’ mental state and depressive symptoms (DS1K), and significant family life events..

Results:

1164 parents (mothers n=1133) completed questionnaires. For 580 children data were collected during inpatient care and treatment; in the case of 584 children data were collected from general practitioners and health visitor nurses in local areas. In the case of 648 children complex medical assessments were done (29 families had no questionnaire data. At the request of the parents, in the case of 212 children a psycho-medical screening was also executed on classic regulation problems.



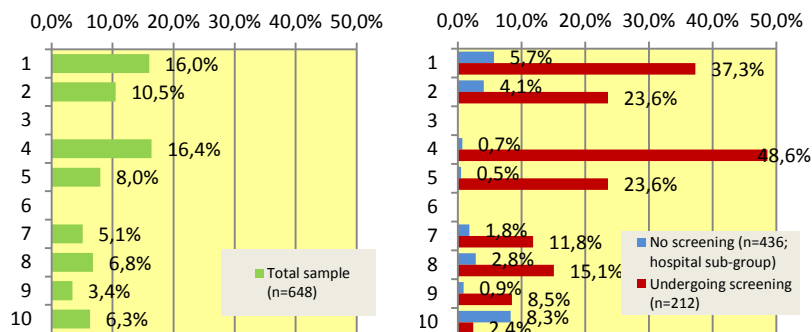
The table shows the percentage ratio of symptoms typical of behaviour control in each patient cohort:

Table: Early childhood regulation problems

Diagnostic categories	Total sample (n=648)	No screening (n=436; hospital sub-group)	Undergoing screening (n=212)
Intense crying, restlessness	16.0%	5.7%	37.3%
Breast feeding disorder	10.5%	4.1%	23.6%
Sleep disorders and their manifestation:			
- Sleep disorder	16.4%	0.7%	48.6%
- Night awakenings	8.0%	0.5%	23.6%
Feeding and weight gain disorders:			
- Lack of appetite – normal weight gain	5.1%	1.8%	11.8%
- Lack of appetite – weight stagnating or decreasing	6.8%	2.8%	15.1%
- Weight stagnating or decreasing – alimentary	3.4%	0.9%	8.5%
- Weight stagnating or decreasing – organic	6.3%	8.3%	2.4%

Note: No questionnaire was available for 29 patients of those undergoing screening; their medical data are also included in this evaluation.

No.	Diagnostic categories
1	Intense crying, restlessness
2	Breast feeding disorder
3	Sleep disorders and their manifestations:
4	Sleep disorder
5	Night awakenings
6	Feeding and weight gain disorders:
7	Lack of appetite – normal weight gain
8	Lack of appetite – weight stagnating or decreasing
9	Weight stagnating or decreasing – alimentary
10	Weight stagnating or decreasing – organic



Conclusion:

By the diverse socio-demographic aspects of our large sample our database is useful in estimating the prevalence of classic regulation problems and can appropriately correlate the relationship between medical and psychosocial factors behind them.