

Parenting Styles and the Associated Health Outcomes in Children

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Introduction

For several years researchers have collected data on diseases that continue to be a growing issue in nationwide. Obesity, heart disease, hyperlipidemia, hypertension and diabetes are a few diseases that are becoming more prevalent across the nation. Because these health issues have become more common in the younger population, several studies have examined environmental factors such as parenting styles, demographics, and geographic location to identify which factors share a significant relationship with child health outcomes. Data from the 2014 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) showed that head of households with a higher level of education had less cases of obesity. Studies have shown much supporting evidence linking parenting styles to child health outcomes.



Results

Permissive parenting styles were found to be associated with a greater child body mass index (BMI) in a study that viewed maternal depression and socioeconomic status in association with childhood obesity. Authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles showed higher Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) scores. Specific parenting behaviors and practices were found to have a strong relationship with child health outcomes. Positive food modeling, avoiding pressuring children to eat, preparing meals at home, and preventing the overconsumption of sugar and caloric-dense foods were specific behaviors that were strongly associated with positive child health outcomes. Parenting styles that provide structure, communication, understanding, and positive reinforcement and reward have shown more favorable outcomes in child health.



Parenting Styles

The four basic styles of parenting can be identified as authoritative, permissive, authoritarian, and uninvolved. Parenting styles are typically passed



Conclusion

In conclusion, significant evidence showed a relationship between parenting styles and child health outcomes. Permissive parenting practices were associated with a higher BMI in children when compared to other parenting styles. Authoritarian and authoritative practices, identified by food restrictions, resulted in higher DASH scores by limiting the over consumption of foods that may contribute to hypertension.

The relationship between the practices based on specific behaviors, such as modeling positive food habits, eating home cooked meals, encouraging, restricting the over consumption of unhealthy foods, and refraining from pressuring children to eat rather than general parenting practices, which can be used to further examine the parenting practices associated with each parenting style that may affect child health outcomes.

Studies that examined specific-behavioral variables may be used to determine parenting styles that are linked to distinct child health outcomes in future research. Research that examines these relationships in depth could determine specific behavioral outcomes that may impact child health.



Key Findings

- Permissive parenting styles were found to be associated with a greater Body Mass Index (BMI).
- Authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles showed higher Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) scores.
- Positive food modeling, avoiding pressuring children to eat, preparing meals at home, and preventing the overconsumption of sugar and caloric-dense foods were specific behaviors that were associated with positive child health outcomes.
- Family counseling and behavior-specific methods such as positive reinforcement and rewarding may be more successful in interventions to reduce BMI.

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