Primary Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect: Identification and Education of Potentially Abusive Parents

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to assess the utility of the Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI) as an evaluation instrument for parenting and education programs. Participation in the study was voluntary and anonymity was guaranteed. Three hundred parents were invited to participate, of which fifty-eight percent volunteered. The total number of participants in the study was 175.

Conclusions

In order to validate the AAPI within Los Angeles County, test scores of twenty-five parents who were identified as abusive were compared to those of twenty-three parents who were identified as non-abusive. A significant difference ($p < 0.001$) existed in scores between the identified abusive parent group and the identified non-abusive parent group. The AAPI was then utilized as an evaluation instrument to measure for attitudinal change following parenting education. Both the experimental groups (i.e. parenting education program, $n=50$) and the control groups ($n=77$) were administered the AAPI as a pre-and post-test. A demographic questionnaire was also administered to both groups.

Based upon the analysis at the $p=0.05$ level of significance, results indicated that: 1) individual potential child abusers were identified, but parenting education did not have a significant ($p < 0.34$) effect on parenting attitudes of this group; 2) attitudinal changes in the experimental groups were not significant $p<.0315$), and 3) no significant relationship existed between parenting attitudes and the specific demographic characteristics of marital status ($p<0.1073$), sex ($p<0.10$), ethnicity ($p<0.0817$), and annual household income ($p < 0.0685$), however a significant relationship was found between parenting attitudes and the demographic characteristics of age ($p<0.0002$), religion ($p<0.0452$), educational level ($p<0.0201$) and number of children each learner had parented ($p<0.0401$).