

PSYCHOLOGICAL RISK FACTORS IN FAMILIES OF AUTISTIC CHILDREN

*M. Gouva*¹, *E. Dragioti*¹, *M. Kitta*², *E. Albani*², *E. Bakou*², *A. Paschou*¹, *E. Kotrotsiou*³

¹School of Health, Higher Technological Educational Institution of Epirus, Ioannina, ²Medical School - Postgraduate Program "Primary Care Health", University of Thessaly, ³School of Health, Higher Technological Educational Institution of Larissa, Larisa, Greece

Introduction: Large bodies of work have shown that parents of children with disabilities experienced a disproportionately greater level of stress relating to their children.

Objectives: To investigate the relationship of shame, psychopathology, hostility as well as anxiety in parents of children with autism.

Aim: To examine the impact of autism spectrum disorder on the family and compared to with families of diabetic children

Methods: A community sample of 105 parents of autistic children (36 men - 69 women, mean age 41 years, SD = 6,5 ranged 30-56) and 83 parents of children with diabetes (18 men - 65 women, mean age 41 years, SD = 7 ranged 24-54) participated to the present study. The families were recruited if their children had been diagnosed with autism or diabetes for at least 1 year and had no other comorbid chronic illnesses. No children age restrictions were applied. The two groups were completed a) the Other of Shame scale (OAS) b) the the Experience of Shame Scale (ESS) c) the Symptom Check-List Revised (SCL-90) d) the Hostility and Direction of Hostility Questionnaire (HDHQ) and e) questionnaire concerning socio-demographic information.

Results: Age did not differ significantly among the two groups ($t=.016$, $p=.986$). Logistic regression found that significant positive correlations were obtained for certain independent risk factors, namely internal shame (OR=0.9, 95%CI .85-.92), anxiety (OR=1.35 95%CI 1.09-1.67) and paranoid hostility (OR=1.93, 95%CI 1.28-2.92), after adjusting for sociodemographic-related variables.

Conclusion: Shame, anxiety and paranoid hostility were found significant for families with a child with autism.