

COMPONENTS OF PARENTAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

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Abstract. *In order to study the styles of parental attitude towards children with autistic disorders, 40 children with autism aged 6 to 15 years at the Children Psychoneurological Center in Tashkent and their parents aged from 28 to 42 years were examined. The parental attitude towards a child with autistic disorders is characterized in mothers by a combination of emotional acceptance and the desire to establish close relationships based on the urge to communicate and the fear of offending, while fathers are prone to displaying authoritarianism, strictness and irritability.*

Keywords: *autism spectrum disorder, parental attitude, components.*

The emotional, behavioral and cognitive influences exerted in the family form the basis of the parent-child relationship, which is characterized by the close emotional relationship and interdependence of its members [1, 2, 9]. The birth of a child with mental development disorders changes the family's usual way of life, causes changes in child-parent, marital relationships, and in the interaction of the family with the surrounding society. The influence of the parental subsystem on the children's subsystem is realized through the parental relationship [8, 10]. Not only the dynamics of his mental development, but also the psychological climate in the family depends on emotional acceptance, an adequate assessment of the child and a coordinated parenting style on the part of mothers and fathers [3, 4].

Recently, children with combined mental development disorders have become the object of interest of various specialists, among which a special category are children suffering from autism. The prevalence of autism and autism spectrum disorders is about 20 cases per 10,000 children. [5]. In accordance with modern concepts, autism is considered as a group of syndromes of different origins, characterized by qualitative impairments in social interaction and communication, and stereotypical behavior [6, 7]. Children with autism especially need a caring attitude, constant help and support from those close to them. A complex combination of distortion of the emotional sphere, a reduced need for communication and a deficit of cognitive skills, hyperselectivity of perception creates significant difficulties in the process of diagnostic, correctional work and child-parent interaction [11,12].

The purpose of the study was a study of parental attitude styles towards children with autistic disorders.

Material and research methods. To achieve the goal and solve the research problems, a survey of 40 children with autism aged 6 to 15 years was carried out, who made up two groups: the main group - 25 children with autism without mental retardation and the comparison group - 15 children with autism with mental retardation, consisting of registered with a diagnosis of "Childhood Autism" at the City Children Psychoneurological Center of Tashkent and their parents aged from 28 to 42 years. The average age of the children was 8.2 ± 1.1 years. The average age of the parents was 35 ± 3.2 years. The selection of children was carried out taking into account the diagnostic criteria for childhood autism according to ICD-10 - F 84.0. To identify parents' attitudes

towards different aspects of family life and towards the child, the PARI (parental attitude research instrument) questionnaire was used.

Research results and discussion. When conducting a comparative analysis, differences were noted between maternal and paternal attitudes towards the children examined, as well as differences in maternal attitudes towards children with both types of disorders and paternal attitudes towards children with both types of disorders. The complexity of the emotional component of parental attitudes toward children with childhood autism reflects a number of opposing trends in the experiences of mothers and fathers. The differences are manifested in more pronounced emotional acceptance of the child on the part of mothers than on the part of fathers. Mothers have a close emotional connection with the child, spend more time with him, and are tolerant of his behavior. Child’s unusual interests and abilities make mothers feel joy and pride. On the one hand, mothers accept the child, but on the other hand, they experience negative emotions towards him. Mothers, like fathers in conversations note embarrassment and shame for the child in front of other people (on the street, in transport). A wide range of negative experiences of parents (feelings of guilt, sadness, anger, fear) are associated with the feeling of the impossibility of giving birth to a “sick” child in their prosperous family, and the injustice of “punishment.”

We have presented a description of the cognitive and behavioral components of parental attitudes towards the examined children of both groups using the PARI questionnaire. According to the interpretation of this methodology, high values on the scales are considered to be scored from 18 and above, low - from 5 to 8. The study showed that it is characterized by differences in ideas about the child and about the family among mothers and fathers raising children with different types of developmental disorders (table 1).

Table 1

Ideas about the child as a cognitive component of the parental attitude among mothers and fathers of the examined children

Options cognitive component parental relationship	Parents of children in the main group		Parents of children in the comparison groups	
	Mothers	Fathers	Mothers	Fathers
Woman’s dependence on family	14.0±4.1	12.4±3.5	12.4±3.6	12.0±4.2
Family conflicts	16.9±4.1	14.3±3.5	12.8±3.6*	13.1±4.2
Super authority of parents	12.9±4.1	15.3±3.5	17.0±3.6*	17.1±4.2
Husband’s indifference	13.5±4.1	12.0±3.5	12.4±3.6	9.7±4.2*

As follows from the results presented in Table 1, mothers of children with autism without mental retardation are more likely than fathers to note the presence of intrafamily conflicts. The differences between them are also manifested in the recognition by mothers of the insufficient involvement of their spouse in family life. When comparing mothers of the two groups, it was revealed that mothers of children with autism without mental retardation are more dependent on

the family than mothers of children with mental retardation. Fathers of children with developmental disabilities differ in that fathers of children with autism without mental retardation recognize to a lesser extent the superordinate authority of their parents and, to a greater extent, recognize the lack of representation of their role in the life of the family.

Thus, the analysis of the cognitive component of the parental attitude showed differences in ideas about the child and the family situation among mothers and fathers of the examined children. Parents do not perceive the problems their child has realistically enough and tend to overestimate the level of his abilities. This can be partly explained by the dominance of such personality defense mechanisms as repression and intellectualization in them compared to parents of children with autism and mental retardation. The image of a child with autism without mental retardation is characterized by different degrees of importance of individual qualities for parents: mothers are more focused on his personality, and fathers are more focused on his area of interest. This reflects a tendency such as the desire for emotional and personal communication with the child among mothers and the emphasis on the concrete, actionable side of the relationship among fathers. The contradictory position of mothers and fathers of children of the main group is manifested in different assessments of the family situation. The presence of intrafamily conflicts is recognized mainly by mothers. However, comparison of these data with high rates of intensity of psychological defenses among fathers, which indicate the presence of an actual psychotraumatic situation, allows us to assume that on their part there is a lack of awareness of the existing problems (Table 2).

Table 2

Ideas about the child as a behavioral component of the parental attitude among mothers and fathers of the examined children

Options behavioral component parental relationship	Parents of children in the main group		Parents of children in the comparison groups	
	Mothers	Fathers	Mothers	Fathers
Encouraging Verbalizations	17.9±4.1	17.6±3.6	13.4±3.6*	12.0±4.1*
Child activity development	17.3±4.1	12.3±3.4	13.0±3.5	12.7±4.2
Equalizing relations	17.3±4.0	12.5±3.5	13.1±3.6	11.4±4.3
Irritability	11.1±4.0	14.1±3.5	14.7±3.7	17.0±4.3
Excessive severity	10.6±4.0	13.3±3.4	12.4±3.7	14.1±4.3
Avoiding Contact	10.5±3.9	14.7±3.4	10.2±3.8	12.0±4.4
Dependency Relationships	15.4±3.8	10.0±3.0	11.6±3.8	9.8±4.5
Suppression of will	13.5±3.8	11.0±3.9	14.5±3.9	17.1±4.4*

Fear of offending	16.9±3.9	13.1±2.8	11.7±4.0	11.2±4.5
Elimination of extra-family influences	12.8±3.8	13.6±2.8	10.1±4.1	11.5±4.5
Suppression of Aggression	13.6±3.6	10.6±2.5	17.1±3.4	17.3±4.4*
Accelerating child development	13.3±3.8	11.0±2.5	13.9±3.1	12.0±3.9

As can be seen from Table 2, mothers of children in the main group are more focused than fathers on communicating with the child, establishing partnerships, and developing his activity. The mothers of these children, unlike the fathers, express a fear of offending the child; they are not inclined to display authoritarianism, severity and irritability.

Mothers and fathers of children in the main group differ from parents of children in the comparison group in their more pronounced desire to accelerate the child's development and, at the same time, limit his contacts with other people. Mothers of children in the main group are more inclined than mothers of children in the comparison group to encourage their child to express himself verbally and establish codependent relationships with him. The contradictory position of the fathers of children of the main group, in comparison with the comparison group, is manifested, on the one hand, in the desire to stimulate the child's speech development, and, on the other, to distance themselves from communication with him. Mothers and fathers of children in the comparison group show similar trends to the parents of children in the main group, consisting in a greater tendency of mothers to establish emotional relationships with the child and fathers to apply harsh educational techniques to him. Fathers of the two groups differ in their authoritarianism and tendency to suppress the child, which is more pronounced in fathers with autism with mental retardation, as well as in the desire to avoid contact with the child, which is more typical for fathers of children with autism without mental retardation.

Conclusion. Thus, the style of parental attitude towards a child with autism without mental retardation is characterized by a combination of emotional acceptance and the desire to establish close relationships based on the urge to communicate and the fear of offending. Parental attitude towards children with autism and mental retardation is also characterized by emotional acceptance, but is combined with an authoritarian communication style in the form of suppression of the child's will and aggressiveness.

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