Associations of Parent-Adolescent Discrepancies in Family Cohesion and Conflict with Adolescent Impairment

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ABSTRACT: Family cohesion and family conflict are important protective and risk factors respectively in the development of child psychopathology. Our study examines parent-adolescent discrepancy of the family environment constructs, family cohesion and family conflict, and their associations with adolescent impairment. The sample consists of 141 parent-adolescent dyads evaluated at an outpatient behavioral health clinic. The mean adolescent age is 14.8 (range 11–18) while the mean parent age is 48.9 (range 32–67). Findings show that adolescents report significantly less family cohesion but do not differ significantly in reports of family conflict. Greater family cohesion is associated with less adolescent impairment by multiple reporters. Nonetheless, greater family conflict is associated with more adolescent impairment by the same reporter. The results show that both adolescent and parent reports of family cohesion and conflict are important to consider when integrating information gathered in a clinical assessment.

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