

PREDICTORS OF COVID-19 RELATED STRESS AMONG PARENTS: DYADIC APPROACH

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During the COVID-19 pandemic, many parents had to reorganize their daily activities as they started working from home and their children switched to online classes. Changes in everyday life could endanger the well-being of parents and lead to higher levels of negative affect, changes in marital satisfaction or changes in the sharing of responsibilities related to childcare.

The aim of this study was to investigate the predictors of stress experience during the COVID-19 pandemic in couples of mothers and fathers of children in middle childhood and early adolescence. More specifically, we focused on how different domains of parental well-being such as marriage satisfaction and experience positive and negative affect, and other family characteristics such as the division of childcare between parents predict COVID-19 related worry and perception of life deterioration due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The research was conducted as part of the CHILD-WELL project funded by the Croatian Science Foundation. 900 pairs of mothers and fathers participated in this part of the research. Actor and partner effects were tested in structural models with latent variables.

The results showed that there were no partner effects. Mothers, but not fathers, who were less satisfied with their marriage, showed higher levels of stress due to the COVID-19. Higher experience of positive affect, i.e. lower experience of negative affect in both mothers and fathers also predicted less stress. It was also investigated whether a more even distribution of childcare activities among parent predicts parental stress. It turned out that even distribution of childcare activities did not predict parental stress when parental education and employment status were included as covariates. Overall, results point to some possible risk factors for difficulties in parents' adjustment during COVID-19 pandemics.