OBSERVATIONAL INSTRUMENTS AND STRATEGIES TO ASSESS COPARENTING: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

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Based on the Theory of Family Systems, the concept of Coparenting is studied as the relationship between parents to deal with the demands involving in raising a child. The relevance of the topic rely on the empirical founds to this relation to child and family outcomes, assessed by self-report and observational methods. Therefore, the aim was to systematically review empirical studies to answer the following question: what are the instruments of observational evaluation of coparenting?

The study design was based on the research question formulation by PICO method and the PRISMA guidelines. In this way, searches were carried out in the electronic databases BVS, PsycNET, MEDLINE, in March and April of 2018. The keyword "coparenting" was combined with "observational data," "observation," and "observational method". Only 19 articles complied with all inclusion criteria. The results shown the following instruments: the Coparenting and Family Rating System, The Interactional Dimensions Coding System, the Revised-PicNic Assessment Scales, The Coparenting Behavior Coding Scale and the Family Alliance Assessment Scale. The tasks used were: the Lausanne Trilogue Play and the prenatal version (more commonly), the Inconsolable Doll Task, the Baby Care Simulator, The Diaper Change Play, the The Pic Nic Game, the Meal Time Play and the Free Play Recorded Task. The Lausanne Trilogue Play paradigm especially captured the family triads from different points of view.

Overall, the studies highlighting the relationship between the family functioning and the children’s socioemotional adjustment: particularly that (a) the competitive coparenting remained the sole predictor of externalizing symptoms and (b) even when controlling for family factors and infant negative affectivity, supportive coparenting continued to predict toddler social–emotional adjustment. Besides the limitations - the majority of sample was well-educated- implications for future research was indicated: more longitudinal studies, with multiple time points and across multiple settings would be helpful.