PREDICTORS OF RESPONSIVENESS TO INFANTS

Anikiej P., Kaźmierczak M., Pawlicka P.

University of Gdansk, Poland

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Responsiveness is the most important component of being a parent (Aisworth, 1978). It requires specific skills regarding intuition, promptness, adaptation and modification of own behaviour (Shoppe-Sullivan et al., 2006). Responsive reactions are characterized by empathy and sensitivity (Mascaro, et. al, 2014) and are based on taking the baby’s perspective and receiving his/her cues. Furthermore, patterns of attachment could be predictors of this cooperative behaviors.

The aim of the study was to find predictors of parental responsiveness. The analysis of factors affecting responsiveness will allow to understand the interactions in the family. Responsiveness experienced in the early stages is extremely important for strengthening ties and would stimulate the development of trust and self-efficacy (Davidov & Grusec, 2006).

One hundred eight seven parents (incl. 46 men and 101 women) having child from 6 to 18 months participated in the study. Parental responsiveness was measured by one-dimensional experimental tool Parental Responsiveness Scale (reliability .92). Empathic dimensions (Empathic Sensitiveness Scale [SWE], Kazmierczak et al., 2007), global personality dimensions (Ten Item Personality Inventory [TIPI-PL]; Sorokowska et al. 2014) and attachment (Experience in close relationships; Lubiewska, 2015) were defined as predictors of parental responsiveness.

The preliminary analyses were carried out. The regression analysis indicated that other-oriented empathy (higher empathic concern), attachment (lower avoidance) and higher consciousness were predictors of parental responsiveness ($F(3,143)=16.37, p< .001, R^2=.26$). Moreover having more children predicted lower parental responsiveness. The obtained results indicate that parents’ response to infant varies depending on their empathy, attachment and global personality traits. Therefore, individual differences should be considered in analyses of responsiveness to infant cues of mothers and fathers.