Genetic and Environmental Influences on the Mental Health of Children: A Twin Study.


Abstract

The current study explored the influences of genetic and environmental factors on the mental health of twins between ages 6 and 16. A total of 41 monozygotic (MZ) twins and 35 dizygotic twins were recruited. The psychological attributes and environmental information of children were evaluated. A significant correlation was found between twins in the diagnostic categories of any psychiatric disorder and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)/hyperkinesis based on the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire scale in MZ twins. Furthermore, fathers' authoritarian parenting style was positively correlated with the probability of any psychiatric disorders and oppositional/conduct disorders, whereas mothers' authoritative parenting style was negatively correlated with the probability of any psychiatric disorders and ADHD/hyperkinesis. The probability of emotional disorders was negatively correlated with scores on the Stressful Life Events Scale. These results collectively suggest that genetic and environmental elements, such as parental rearing style and stressful life events, may influence children's mental health.