

# Comparison of Parenting Stress and Quality of Life among Mothers and Fathers of Intellectual Disability Children in Erode, Tamilnadu

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## Abstract

The present study was undertaken to Compare Parenting stress and Quality of life among mothers and fathers of Intellectual disability children in Erode, Tamil Nadu. The present study was a cross-sectional (comparative) study. 60 couples having children aged between 2 and 18 diagnosed with ID based on Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM5) criteria formed the sample of this study. Case Study Schedule was used to get the needed information about the selected Parents of Mentally Challenged. The questionnaire was standardized questionnaire. It consists of 30 items, under 4 parts namely, Physiological, Emotional, Cognitive and Behavioral. The WHOQOL BREF questionnaire is used to assess the quality of life.<sup>9</sup> Prior permission was obtained to use the Tamil version of the questionnaire. The WHOQOLBREF is an abbreviated version of the original WHOQOL- 100. Very high level of stress was observed in mothers and high levels of stress was observed in fathers. Quality of life was more or less same in both mothers and fathers. There is a moderate negative correlation between fathers stress score and QOL score. It means stress decreases their QOL increases. There is a moderate negative correlation between mothers stress score and QOL score. It means stress decreases their QOL increases. The study recommends further multi center studies for better understanding and to plan adequate interventions.

**Key words:** *Quality of life, Mothers, Fathers, Stress*

## Introduction

Mental retardation (MR) according to the World Health Organization has overall prevalence of 1-3% in the global scenario,<sup>1</sup> In India 5.6 % has been reported and decadal change in disabled population in India is 22.4%.<sup>2</sup> This by itself suggests the magnitude of the problem in terms of the economy for a developing country like ours. MR also produces psychological, social and financial distress to the whole family, particularly parents, as they are usually the only constant caretakers.<sup>3</sup> Parents of children with intellectual disabilities frequently report

symptoms of depression and anxiety. Studies have shown an association between parental distress and caretaking of children with developmental cognitive delays.<sup>4</sup> A large number of these children have behavioral issues, which can lead to higher levels of parental stress.<sup>5</sup> Parents reported more psychiatric symptomatology when the child showed a high level of dysfunction.<sup>6</sup> Treatment progress may need to address parental stress, which in turn will help optimize treatment outcome for the child and the family.<sup>7</sup> It is important to guide the provision of needed psychosocial, educational, and health services that can strengthen family coping and positive adjustment. Studies had suggest that the reduction of parenting stress is paramount in the enhancement of a child's family life and in the child's ultimate integration within society. There is little data in developing countries, such as India especially Erode district of Tamilnadu, concerning the impact of raising children with ID, upon the quality of life of parent and

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their stress. Hence, the present study was undertaken to Compare Parenting stress and Quality of life among mothers and fathers of Intellectual disability children in Erode, Tamil Nadu

## Materials and Method

**Study design:** The present study was a cross-sectional (comparative) study

**Study setting:** The present study was conducted in and around Erode district, Tamil Nadu.

**Study participants:** 60 couples having children aged between 2 and 18 diagnosed with ID based on Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM5) criteria formed the sample of this study. The schools meant for children with intellectual disability were chosen. Within a school, parents of children were chosen randomly. These schools are from Erode in Tamil Nadu.

### Method:

**Case study schedule:** Case Study Schedule was used to get the needed information about the selected Parents of Mentally Challenged. Data was collected regarding the age, educational qualification, income, family type of parents, and number of children they have and level of retardation of the mentally challenged. It also assesses the negative emotions and symptoms of the parents of mentally challenged.

**Stress inventory:** The questionnaire was standardized questionnaire. It consists of 30 items, under 4 parts namely, Physiological, Emotional, Cognitive and Behavioral. There are two possible responses to each item namely, 'Yes' or 'No'. The mothers were asked to tick any one, which applied to them the most. There was no time limit. But the mothers were asked to respond as quickly as possible. Scoring Key and Norms were

provided by the authors. The validity of S.I. is 0.80 and the reliability by test retest method is 0.95.<sup>8</sup>

**WHOQOL BREF:** The WHOQOL BREF questionnaire is used to assess the quality of life.<sup>9</sup> Prior permission was obtained to use the Tamil version of the questionnaire. The WHOQOLBREF is an abbreviated version of the original WHOQOL- 100. The WHOQOL is the only quality of life instrument that has been developed for wide range of cultures in 15 international field centers simultaneously including the Madras center presently Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India.

**Data analysis:** Data was analyzed using SPSS version 7.5. The results were expressed in terms of percentage, mean and SD. Students T test, Chi square test, were applied to compare the mean scores of different variables under the four domains. Karl Pearson correlation coefficient used to study the correlation between parent stress score and quality of life. A probability value of <0.05 is considered significant.

## Results

Study results were presented in table no 1 to 5. There is a moderate negative correlation between fathers stress score and QOL score. It means stress decreases their QOL increases. There is a moderate negative correlation between mothers stress score and QOL score. It means stress decreases their QOL increases. Younger fathers are having less stress and better QOL than others. Mother who generates more income are having less stress better QOL than others. The results of the analysis of these data demonstrate that the families with a member with a disability report significantly greater stress, they also demonstrated that as stress increases the quality of life decreases. Governments need to address this problem if current policies of integrating people with intellectual disabilities into the community are to be successful.

**Table 1: Total stress between mother and father of ID children**

Level of Stress score	Father		Mother		Chi square test
	n	%	n	%	
Low	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	$\chi^2=17.85$ P=0.001*** DF=2 significant
Moderate	10	16.7%	3	5.0%	
High	43	71.6%	30	50.0%	
Very High	7	11.7%	27	45.0%	
Total	60	100.0%	60	100.0%	

(NS= not significant S=significant DF= Degrees of Freedom) (\* significant at P≤0.05 \*\* highly significant at P≤0.01 \*\*\* very high significant at P≤0.001)

**Table 2: Mean stress between mother and father of id children**

Stress domains	group				Mean difference	Student's independent t-test
	Father		Mother			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
PHYSIOLOGICAL	3.45	1.43	3.80	1.46	0.35	t=1.32 P=0.18 not significant
EMOTIONAL	3.52	1.43	5.28	1.66	1.77	t=6.24 P=0.001*** significant
COGNITIVE	3.03	1.06	3.75	1.08	0.72	t=3.67 P=0.001*** significant
BEHAVIORAL	3.47	1.55	5.32	1.65	1.85	t=6.33 P=0.001*** significant
Total	13.47	4.24	18.15	3.65	4.68	t=6.48 P=0.001*** significant

(\* significant at P≤0.05 \*\* highly significant at P≤0.01 \*\*\* very high significant at P≤0.001)

**Table 3: Comparing the QOL between mother and father of ID children**

Level of QOL score	Father		Mother		Chi square test
	n	%	n	%	
Poor	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	χ <sup>2</sup> =6.49 P=0.04* DF=2 significant
Moderate	16	26.7%	22	36.7%	
Good	34	56.7%	36	60.0%	
Very good	10	16.6%	2	3.3%	
Total	60	100.0%	60	100.0%	

(NS= not significant S=significant DF= Degrees of Freedom \* significant at P≤0.05 \*\* highly significant at P≤0.01 \*\*\* very high significant at P≤0.001)

**Table 4: Mean QOL between mother and father of ID children**

QOL domains	group				Mean difference	Student's independent t-test
	Father		Mother			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
PHYSICAL HEALTH	62.48	7.25	62.97	8.29	0.48	t=0.34 P=0.73not significant
PSYCHOLOGICAL	52.58	17.66	49.77	16.67	2.82	t=0.89P=0.37 not significant
SOCIAL	52.90	16.46	47.05	15.85	5.85	t=1.98 P=0.05* significant
ENVIRONMENTAL	54.75	11.03	50.35	9.05	4.40	t=2.38 P=0.02* significant
Overall	55.68	10.03	52.53	7.20	3.15	t=1.97 P=0.05* significant

(NOT SIGIFICANT  $P > 0.05$  AT \* significant at  $P \leq 0.05$  \*\* highly significant at  $P \leq 0.01$  \*\*\* very high significant at  $P \leq 0.001$ )

**Table 5: Correlation between parenting stress and QOL of parents of id children**

		Mean $\pm$ SD	Karl Pearson correlation coefficient
Father	STRESS	13.47 $\pm$ 4.24	r=0.49p=0.01** significant
	QOL	55.68 $\pm$ 10.03	
Mother	STRESS	18.15 $\pm$ 3.65	r=0.42 p=0.01** significant
	QOL	52.53 $\pm$ 7.20	

## Discussion

The present study was undertaken to Compare Parenting stress and Quality of life among mothers and fathers of Intellectual disability children in Erode, Tamil Nadu. There is a moderate negative correlation between fathers stress score and QOL score. It means stress decreases their QOL increases. There is a moderate negative correlation between mothers stress score and QOL score. It means stress decreases their QOL increases. Younger fathers are having less stress and better QOL than others. Mother who generates more income are having less stress better QOL than others. The results of the analysis of these data demonstrate that the families with a member with a disability report significantly greater stress, they also demonstrated that as stress increases the quality of life decreases.<sup>9</sup> Governments need to address this problem if current policies of integrating people with intellectual disabilities into the community are to be successful. Special measures like early diagnosis, prompt treatment and counseling for stress of the parents along with provision of need based rehabilitation services for the Intellectual disability children at different levels to reduce the stress burden of their parents.<sup>10</sup> There is a great need to identify at an early stage which parents are at poor mental health and facing psychological problems, so that successfully targeted those parents to modify their thinking style and living patterns Psycho-social intervention programmes for family caregivers of children with Intellectual disability should incorporate building upon specific strategies to enhance their quality of life. Parents of children with disability face multiple challenges due to their child's developmental difficulties.<sup>11-12</sup> Parents who adopt positive and problem-focused strategies

report less stress and better well-being than those who often use emotion-focused coping strategies, which are ineffective and do not resolve the adverse situation that provokes the stress.

## Conclusion

Very high level of stress was observed in mothers and high levels of stress was observed in fathers. Quality of life was more or less same in both mothers and fathers. There is a moderate negative correlation between fathers stress score and QOL score. It means stress decreases their QOL increases. There is a moderate negative correlation between mothers stress score and QOL score. It means stress decreases their QOL increases. The study recommends further multi center studies for better understanding and to plan adequate interventions.

**Source of Support:** Nil

**Conflict of Interest:** The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

**Ethical Approval:** The study protocol was approved by institutional human ethical committee. All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional research committee.

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