

Developmental Pediatrics

Title: FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH MENTAL HEALTH ADAPTATION IN A MULTI-SITE STUDY OF ADOLESCENTS & YOUNG ADULTS (AYAS) WITH SB

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Background: While adolescents with chronic conditions in general and those with spina bifida (SB) specifically have been found to have challenges in mental health (MH) with higher incidence of depression than their peers, this finding has differed by parent or adolescent report. In addition, the factors associated with mental health have not been well delineated.

Method: This multi-site descriptive study included a total of 135 parent/AYA pairs. 95 pairs who had complete interview and extensive neuropsychological testing were included in this analysis. Interviews were conducted with computer-assisted telephone interviewing. Neuropsychological testing was conducted using standardized assessments under the supervision of site neuropsychologist. The characteristics of the sample are described elsewhere. Mental Health was measured by parent report of the Internal and External Behavior Problems (Child Behavior Checklist) and AYA report of depression (using either the Children's Depression Inventory or the Beck Depression Inventory) and Overall Self-worth (subscale from Harter's Adolescent Self-Perception Profile).

Results: The measurement model using Structured Equation Modeling (AMOS) supported two different MH concepts (parent report of MH and AYA report of MH). Age was related to both, with older age associated with negative MH adaptation. In addition more neuropsychological deficits and lower SES were associated with parent report of MH problems whereas less positive adolescent beliefs and low family resourcefulness were associated with adolescent report of less positive MH adaptation. The impact of level of lesion was mediated by neuropsychological status for parent report of MH and SES was mediated by family resourcefulness in AYA report. The model fit was supported by fit statistics (chi square $p=.19$, CFI=.96, RMSEA =.048)

Conclusion: Common to both reports is worsening MH adaptation with age which may have implications for transitioning to adulthood. As perceptions of AYA MH adaptation outcomes and the factors associated with these outcomes vary between parent and AYA report, clinicians need to evaluate both to promote positive MH adaptation.