

Poster

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Poster 30

[P-30-03] From Parent to Child: Fear of Negative Evaluation and Mindreading in Japanese Adolescents

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Fear of negative evaluation (FNE) is a core cognitive component of social anxiety. Although genetic predisposition contributes to the transmission of social anxiety, sensitivity to social evaluation is also shaped by environmental influences, such as parental modeling. Previous studies suggest that parental fear of negative child evaluation (FNCE) plays a key role in the intergenerational transmission of social evaluative fears.

Theory of Mind (ToM), or the ability to infer others' mental states, is essential for navigating social interactions. Deficits in ToM can contribute to social anxiety by increasing the likelihood of misinterpretation and ineffective interaction. Enhanced mindreading ability may also exacerbate anxiety by increasing sensitivity to others' thoughts and emotions. Mindreading is especially important in the Japanese high-context society as a means of understanding implicit communication and avoiding interpersonal conflict. Within such cultural context, parents may experience elevated FNCE, fostering greater FNE in children. Moreover, high parental FNCE combined with lower child mindreading abilities may be associated with increased risk of depression.

The present study investigated whether mindreading abilities and parental FNCE are linked to child FNE and depression in a Japanese sample. Participants were 1,200 adolescents who completed the Asian Reading the Mind in the Eyes Test (RMET), Mindreading Beliefs Scale (MBS), Parental FNCE Scale, Short FNE Scale, and PHQ-9.

Hierarchical regression analyses demonstrated that both parental FNCE and RMET performance were positively associated with child FNE. Furthermore, interaction effects indicated that high parental FNCE, when combined with low RMET or high MBS scores, predicted greater depressive symptoms. These findings suggest that subjective and objective mindreading are distinct constructs, and that mindreading difficulties may increase vulnerability to both FNE and depression, particularly in the context of Japanese sociocultural norms.