

Putting Research to Work for Military Families



Focus:
Civilian

Day-to-Day Inconsistency in Parent Knowledge: Links with Youth Health and Parents' Stress

Lippold, M. A., McHale, S. M., Davis, K. D., & Kossek, E. E. (2015). Day-to-day inconsistency in parent knowledge: Links with youth health and parents' stress. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 56*(3), 293-299. doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2014.11.017

SUMMARY: Parental knowledge of youth's behaviors is an important aspect of childrearing. To better understand the impact of consistent parental knowledge, researchers examined parents' reports of day-to-day knowledge of youth's activities and behaviors. A link between degree of consistent knowledge and youth's outcomes was found.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Individual parents differed on their daily knowledge of how youth spent their free time almost as much as differences on daily knowledge among the sample of parents.
- Parents who had inconsistent knowledge about how youth spent their free time had youth who reported more risky behaviors and worse health than parents who had more consistent knowledge.
- Parents who experienced more global and daily stressors, reported more inconsistent knowledge about how youth spent their free time.

IMPLICATIONS FOR MILITARY PROFESSIONALS:

Military professionals could:

- Participate in professional trainings to learn more about the impact of various parenting strategies on youth's functioning and outcomes and how these relate to military families
- Help military parents develop strategies to increase knowledge of their youth's activities

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Host communication workshops for military parents and youth to improve their communication skills within the family
- Develop positive peer social support groups for youth who are at-risk of negative social and health outcomes

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Continue to support programs aimed at promoting recreational activities that increase resilience in military families
- Encourage collaboration between military- and community-based family support programs to help improve the functioning of military youth

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METHODS

- There were no data provided as to how the parents were recruited for the study. Parents' data were obtained from a larger study of a field trial of a workplace intervention.
- Parents completed self-report surveys on family demographics, work and family experiences, and individual well-being. Youth were interviewed about their health, adjustment, and family relationships.
- Researchers also gathered data via eight consecutive nightly phone calls to parents and youth who were separately asked about their experiences during the day of the call.

PARTICIPANTS

- Participants were 129 parents and their youth. The number of youth participants was not reported.
- Forty-five percent of the parents were female, while 55% of the youth were female. The average age of the parents was 45.24 years (SD = 6.30) and the average age of youth were 13.39 years (SD = 2.40).
- The race/ethnicity of the youth sample was White (59%), Black (3%), Latino (15%), Asian-American (18%) and Multiracial (4%). The race/ethnicity of the parents were not reported.

LIMITATIONS

- Certain demographic data for parents and youth were missing (e.g., number of youth included in the sample), which limits the ability to interpret the data and replicate the study.
- Most of the parental and youth outcomes were assessed by one-item measures, which limits the validity and reliability of the constructs that were measured.
- There was no explanation of the recruitment of participants, which limits the ability to interpret how robust the research methods were.

AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Collect longitudinal data from youth and parents to assess changes in their communication patterns
- Assess aspects of youth and parental functioning with more complex self-report measures
- Examine risk and protective factors that impact consistency of parental knowledge

ASSESSING RESEARCH THAT WORKS



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