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A study on the role of learned helplessness, self-efficacy and perceived social support in determining resilience in parents of children with Neurodevelopmental Disorders.

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Abstract

Parents who have children with neurodevelopmental disorders are known to face numerous stressors such as financial difficulties, physical burnout and mental strain. The caregiving process for these parents is so much more difficult as their children depend on them for the simplest of tasks such as bathing, feeding, walking, clothing themselves etc. In India, resources (e.g., special educators, inclusive schools, paediatric psychiatrists), that should cater to these parents is also lacking. The combination of the lack of resources, the stress of taking care of a child with special needs and the stigma attached to mental disorders, all contribute to an overwhelming parental distress. Numerous studies have been previously conducted that portray that, parents who have children with special needs are susceptible to experiencing depressive symptoms. However, there is a dearth of literature when it comes to studying the variable of learned helplessness (which is closely related to the development of depression) in this specific population. The purpose of this study is to assess the role of learned helplessness, perceived social support and self-efficacy in determining resilience in parents who have children with neurodevelopmental disorders. A purposive sampling technique was used during the data collection process to select 160 parents of special needs children from multiple centres for child development and inclusive schools in Mangalore as well as in Hyderabad. The following questionnaires were distributed among the participants to collect the data: Learned Helplessness Questionnaire (Quinless & McDermott-Nelson, 1988), Family Resilience Scale (Kaner & Bayrakli 2010), Parenting Sense of Competence Scale (Johnston & Mash, 1989) and the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS). The data of this study was analysed using Pearson's correlation, multiple regression analysis and mediation analysis. The results of the study reveal that the association between learned helplessness and the variables of resilience, social support and self-efficacy is negative. The results further show that there is a positive association between resilience, social support and self-efficacy. The analysis of multiple regression revealed that self-efficacy and social support are negative predictor variables of learned helplessness and positive predictor variables for resilience. Learned helplessness is revealed as a negative predictor variable for resilience. The results obtained

from the mediation analysis depict that learned helplessness is a mediator variable in the association between self-efficacy and resilience and has a partial mediating effect in the association between social support and resilience. The results further show that self-efficacy mediates between the relationship between resilience and social support, while social support mediates between the relationship between self-efficacy resilience.

Keywords: Learned Helplessness, Resilience, Self-efficacy, social support, Neurodevelopmental Disorder, Parents