

PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS IN CHILDREN WITH RECURRENT ABDOMINAL PAIN

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Background: impact of in children with recurrent abdominal pain (RAP) remains controversial. The aim was to explore psychosocial factors in children with RAP. Methods: we investigated 78 children (age 5-14 y), with RAP. Underlying organic disease was excluded after physical examination and standardized laboratory evaluation. One hundred thirty-one healthy schoolchildren volunteered as controls. A questionnaire was used for patients and controls to assessing psychological and other factors, such socioeconomic family difficulties etc. The psychological part of the questionnaire consists of 3 clinical scales (Depression, Anxiety and Behavior) and totally 35 items and was answered by the parents. All scores for patients were calculated (separately and totally) and correlated with these of controls. Results: Five percent of patients had moved with their families to another location, versus 1.5% of controls ($p<0.05$). Thirty-one percent of patients' families had experienced severe economic difficulties versus 17.6% of controls ($p<0.05$). Patient's families had more frequent low socioeconomic status (37% versus 15% of controls). Patients had in total more frequent as controls anxiety, depression and behavior derangement ($p<0.05$). From 6 items that referred to anxiety, 3 differed significant between the two groups. From 16 items that referred to depression, 9 differed significant between the two groups. In the behavior scale 9 of 13 items considered significant between controls and patients. Conclusions: Psychological factors, low socioeconomic status, family movement and severe economic difficulties are more frequent in children with functional RAP. These factors may be responsible for expression of RAP in children.

