

Publication

Anxiety disorders in mothers and their children : prospective-longitudinal community study - authors reply

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As Mushtaq & Minn-Din correctly point out, Bijl *et al*¹ did not find associations between prevalence rates of any psychiatric disorder (including anxiety disorders) in children and anxiety-related symptoms in parents. However, one must be aware of several methodological differences to our investigation: the results cited by Mushtaq & Minn-Din are based on 12-month prevalence rates and multivariate logistic regression analysis additionally controlling for childhood adversities and socio-demographic characteristics. We would like to clarify that the results of the Bijl *et al* paper are much more comparable with our study and that the results we are actually referring to are those based on life-time prevalence rates of psychiatric disorders in children without controlling for childhood adversities and reported separately for the various offspring disorders. Here, Bijl *et al* clearly report associations between anxiety in parents and children.

In addition, it is true that the adult children in the Bijl *et al* study were considerably older (18–65 years) than the offspring in our study (17–21 years at follow-up). We would like to add that there are other substantial ways in which the studies differ; for example, our use of assessment via direct interviews v. family-history information.¹ Nevertheless, we do not see why our claim that we confirm and extend the Bijl *et al* study should be problematic, especially when taking into account the low median for age at onset of anxiety disorders.²

We would also like to point out that both studies were community-based so that the use of the term 'patients' by Mushtaq & Minn-Din is slightly misleading.

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