

Publication

Callous unemotional traits and the relationship between aggressive parenting practices and conduct problems in Singaporean families

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Research into parenting influences on child conduct problems in Asian countries has been limited compared to that conducted in Western countries, especially with regard to interplay between parenting and callous unemotional (CU) traits (e.g., lack of guilt and empathy). This study examined associations between dimensions of aggressive parenting practices (psychological aggression, mild and severe physical aggression), dimensions of child aggression (proactive, reactive), and child CU traits, in Singapore. Participants were children and adolescents with clinic-referred externalizing problems (N = 282; 87.6% boys), aged 7-16 years. Mild and severe parental physical aggression was found to be uniquely associated with children's proactive aggression, whereas parental psychological aggression was uniquely associated with both proactive and reactive aggression. Consistent with previous evidence regarding CU traits as moderators of the relationship between negative parenting and child conduct problems, physically aggressive parenting was found to be more strongly associated with children's proactive aggression among children with low levels of CU traits, than those with high CU traits. These findings support the need for ongoing research into CU traits in Asian cultures, focused on heterogeneous risk pathways to antisocial behavior and individual differences in response to family-based interventions.

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