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# A novel smartphone-based measure of parenting: Assessing positive and negative parental consistency and its links to child ADHD

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## Introduction

- Parents of children with ADHD exhibit more negative parenting behaviors compared to children without ADHD symptoms.
- Parental consistency
  - The day to day (or moment to moment) follow-through of adhering to rules/standards of conduct for child's behavior.
- Few studies have examined whether inconsistent *positive* parental behavior are also associated with child ADHD.
  - E.g. warmth, positive reinforcement
- Daily smartphone-based ecological momentary assessment (EMA)
  - Used to examine associations between consistency of positive and negative parenting and child ADHD symptoms.
- Interested in the role of the child's sex as a potential moderator of the association between parental consistency and ADHD
  - Boys with ADHD tend to exhibit more externalizing behaviors compared to girls with ADHD.

## Hypothesis

- Parents would exhibit greater inconsistency in both negative and positive behaviors with male children compared to female children in connection with child ADHD symptoms.

## Method

- Participants
  - 201 kindergartners and their parents
  - 55.2% male
  - 81.6% Caucasian
- Mobile Survey of Parent-Child Dynamics*
  - Measures positive and negative parental consistency
  - A daily EMA survey delivered to parents' smartphones each day for one week.
  - Questions about different aspects of positive and negative parenting practices
  - MSSD - mean square successive difference (MSSD) score
- Questionnaires
  - Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (APQ)
    - Parent questionnaire that measures inconsistent discipline
  - Child Behaviors Checklist (CBCL)
    - Parent questionnaire that assesses ADHD symptoms (attention problems subscale)

## Results

	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]
MSSD	.2073297	.0902307	2.30	0.022	.0304809 .3841786
APQ	.0343164	.0151098	2.27	0.023	.0047017 .0639311

## Results

	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
F	MSSD	-.0572757	.0769817	-0.74	0.457	-.2081572 .0936057
	APQ	-.0043215	.0107997	-0.40	0.689	-.0254885 .0168454
M	MSSD	.1189805	.0553904	2.15	0.032	.0104173 .2275438
	APQ	.0308452	.0115133	2.68	0.007	.0082795 .0534109

## Discussion

- Parents who were more inconsistent in their expressions of warmth and positive reinforcement in response to their child's behaviors exacerbated their child's ADHD symptoms, but only among boys.
- Parents of boys may simply notice and acknowledge boys' ADHD symptoms more than girls', which in turn, might cause them to engage in less consistent positive parenting practices.
- Longitudinal (i.e., mediation) analyses are needed to examine whether these associations are causal.
- Parent-child interventions for ADHD should focus on encouraging greater *consistency* of adaptive parenting behaviors, and not just on reducing negative parenting behaviors