Does It Matter Who Administers Corporal Punishment?
Comparison of Mother-Only, Father-Only, Two-Parent, and Neither-Parent CP in Childhood on Subsequent Adult Functioning

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Corporal Punishment by Mothers and Fathers

• Research on corporal punishment rarely examines CP by both mothers and fathers
  – Of 88 studies in Gershoff’s (2002) meta-analysis, only 6 reported effects for parent and child sex
  – Some studies report separate effects for mothers and fathers (e.g., Lansford et al., 2010; Mackenzie et al., 2012)
  – What about one vs. the other vs. both?

One vs. The Other Vs. Both

• Evidence from other areas of research indicates that who is key
  – Intimate partner violence: Dyadic Aggression Types (Straus, 2011, today)
  – Parents with shared discipline responsibility show less CP, less psychological aggression, and as much or more inductive discipline than families where the mother or father alone has primary responsibility (Fauchier & Straus, 2007)
  – Mothers’ positive parenting buffers impact of fathers’ harsh discipline (McKee et al., 2007)

Present Study

• What is the impact of corporal punishment by mothers vs. fathers vs. both vs. neither on later adjustment?

Methods: Sample

• University students from 27 sites in 15 nations in International Parenting Study
  – N=13,131; using N=11,657 (89%) who reported on discipline for two parents
  – 91% reported on biological mother and father
  – Average age 21.1 (3.9)
    • 91% of sample 18-25
    – 31% male
    – 73% from majority ethnic/cultural background of their nation

Measures: Discipline

Dimensions of Discipline Inventory (Adult recall form, detailed retrospective report for age 10, yes/no for all of childhood)

• 5-part self-report questionnaire
• Section C: 26 discipline behaviors (x2 for mother and father)
• 11 response choices: never to 2x/day
• 4-item Corporal Punishment scale
  Ex. How often did your father/mother spank, slap, smack, or swat you?
  Ex. How often did your father/mother use a paddle, hairbrush, belt, or other object? (Straus & Fauchier, 2008)
Measures: Current Functioning

- Depression (12 items from Major Depression Inventory)
- Anxiety (3 items from Symptom Checklist-90)
- Hostility (3 items from SCL-90)
- Antisocial Behavior (5 items from Personal and Relationships Profile)
- Alcohol Problems (3 items from PRP)
- Partner Violence (6 items from CTS2-short)

Results: Which Parent Used CP?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Age 10</th>
<th>Ever</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother Only</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Only</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The percents in the Ever column cannot be right. Also the age 10 does not add to 100

Results: Which Parent Used CP?*

11,657 University students in 15 nations in International Parenting Study

Results: Depression

$F(3,11032) = 49.31, p < .001$; both > mother and father > neither

Results: Anxiety

$F(3,11032) = 15.43, p < .001$; both and mother > neither; mother > father

Results: Hostility

$F(3,11032) = 47.60, p < .001$; both > father > neither; mother > neither
Results: Alcohol Abuse

- Alcohol Abuse
- Neither: 1.55
- Mother Only: 1.58
- Father Only: 1.59
- Both Parents: 1.70

F(3,10938) = 33.66, p < .001; both > mother, father, and neither

Results: Antisocial Behavior

- Antisocial Behavior
- Neither: 1.59
- Mother Only: 1.65
- Father Only: 1.62
- Both Parents: 1.75

F(3,10954) = 81.97, p < .001; both and mother > neither; both > father

Results: Partner Violence Perpetration

- Partner Violence Perpetration
- Neither: 0.4
- Mother Only: 0.6
- Father Only: 0.5
- Both Parents: 0.7

F(3,9270) = 2.96, p < .05; both > neither

Conclusion

- Children who receive corporal punishment go on to have poorer functioning than those who do not receive CP
- Children who receive CP from both parents have poorer functioning in many ways than children who receive CP from only one parent
- Mother-only CP seems linked to children’s later anxiety more than father-only CP
- Examining which parent uses CP provides crucial information