

Assessment of the Potential for Maladaptive Parenting in Expectant Fathers with the Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI)

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Doctoral Dissertation
University of Alabama, Birmingham, 1988

Child abuse is a major societal problem of grave concern today. There has been an increase in the number of child abuse cases where the father has been identified as the perpetrator. Early detection of the potential for maladaptive parenting has proven beneficial in preventing child abuse. There is a dearth of research in the area of the father's role in child abuse and a lack of valid paternal assessment tools. The problem statement for this study was: Can expectant fathers be assessed for the potential for maladaptive parenting with the Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI)?

The purpose of this study was to determine if the Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory, used with other populations, could be used to assess potential for maladaptive parenting in expectant fathers. Burr's (1972) concepts of role transition and the metaparadigm of nursing provided the framework for this study.

Image factor analysis with varimax rotation by SPSSx was the statistical method used. This method was selected in order to as nearly as possible replicate, with another group, Bavolek's (1984) work. Descriptive statistics of the 232 voluntary, first-time expectant fathers was presented.

This sample's responses on the AAPI were similar to other populations. The subjects' scores on the AAPI indicated they lacked knowledge of child growth and development, had appropriate attitudes toward empathy, had strong beliefs in physical discipline, and had appropriate attitudes toward family roles.

Conclusions indicated early assessment of expectant fathers was an important nursing role. The AAPI was appropriate for use with expectant fathers. Expectant fathers need information in regard to child growth and development and methods of discipline other than physical.

Recommendations developed from this investigation indicated further research was needed with expectant fathers, their role transition, and especially their role in child abuse. Nurse educators need to make changes in courses to include signs of potential for maladaptive parenting and changing paternal roles. Nurses in practice must be aware of signs of potential for maladaptive parenting and assist expectant fathers to make the transition to fatherhood.

References

Bavolek, S.J. (1984). *Handbook for the Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory*. Eau Claire, WI: Family Development Resources.

Burr, W.R. (1972). Role transitions. A reformulation of theory. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 34, 407-416.

