

## Mental Health Problems of Parents with Intellectually Disabled Child

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the mental health of parents with intellectually disabled children (N=78) their mean age was 36.43 years. Another group of 100 parents were taken as a control group, who blessed with a normal child; their mean age was 37.24 years. Jodhpur Multiphasic Personality Inventory (JMPI) was administered individually to all of them. Results indicate that parents with intellectually disabled child scored higher on the elderly subjects scored significantly higher on MD, Heb, Sc (s). PD, Sc.PA, F, As, CR. Ph.D. Ne, SI, PU, ANR and Hy. D. categories of Form A of JMPI than the control group.

**Keywords:** *Mental Health, Intellectual Disability, Personality*

An intellectually disabled child in a family is usually stress producer for family members. It needs a reorientation and reevaluation of family aims, responsibilities and relationship with the community member. In India, the people of community have a different attitude towards intellectual disabled. In modern society, home-based care has resulted in many adverse consequences. The major drawback of this system is the child has no exposure for social interaction, hence, no opportunity for skill development.

The emotional stress and social stress that these parents undergo have been described by various investigators Seshadari (1983), Crnic et al. (1983), Wig et al (1985), Sethi & Sitholey (1986) & Tunali and Power, (1993) found that the parents of mentally retarded children had low level of sound mental health because they had a high level of perceived stress. Kumar and Aktar (2001) reported that mothers of mentally retarded children had a higher level of anxiety and stress in comparison to the mothers of normal children. They reported that the mothers of mentally retarded children differ significantly from the parents of normal children on anxiety and stress level.

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Upadhyaya, G.R. and Havalappanavar (2008) assessed Fathers and mothers of 628 mentally challenged individuals for their perceived stress. They reported that mothers have shown higher stress compared to fathers, the difference being significant at 0.01. Most of the parents report mild to moderate stress and none of them report very high stress. In the areas of social stress, stress of care and, emotional stress reported higher for these parents. It is noticed that more than one mentally challenged children in the family; higher levels of behaviour disorder; lower age of the mentally challenged, individual and parents; and lower income of the family are associated with higher stress.

Seth (1979) reported care stress and social stress in 83% of mothers, emotional stress in 80% of mothers and financial problem in 47% of mothers. Datta et al (2002) find that expressed emotions toward the child, age of the child and income as important factors associated with burden. Gupta & Jain (2002) find that less educated, low income group and rural parents have more problems with their spastic mentally handicapped children.

### **METHOD AND PROCEDURE**

#### *Sample*

A sample of 78 parents with intellectually disabled child was drawn from different parts of the Jodhpur City. The individuals, who have scored high on validity scales L and F, were eliminated. The age of the parents was 28 & above with a mean of 36.43 years on the other hand a control group of 100 parents who have normal child was taken as control group from Jodhpur city the average age of this group was 37.24 years. All the individuals were taken from both the category of socio-economic status i.e. lower middle class and lower class. Most of them had passed secondary examination. All of them were approached individually at their homes for the present study.

#### *Material*

Jodhpur Multiphasic Personality Inventory (JMPI) constructed and standardized by Joshi and Malik (1980) consists of three broad areas, viz, Psychoses, Psyconeuroses and Psychosomatic dis-orders. The three parts of JMPI consist of 336, 273 and 250 items respectively. Keeping in view the length of JMPBI, Malik and Gunthey (1980) developed parallel forms (Form A and Form B) of this inventory. For the present study Form A has been used for two parts only i.e. Psychosis and psychoneuroses. The psychoses part of Form A consists of 178 items and measures problems of 6 areas, viz. Schizophrenia Simple (ScS), Schizophrenia Paranoid (ScPa), Paranoia (Pa), Hebephrenia (Heb), Psychotic Depression (PD) and Manic Depression (MD). The psychoneuroses part of this inventory consists of 149 items and there are 7 clinical scales, viz. Anxiety (AN), hysteria Dissociate (Hd.D) Conversion Reaction (CR), Phobia (Ph). Obsessive Compulsive (OC), Depression (d), Neurasthenia (Ne) & one non- clinical scale i.e. Social introversion (SI). Besides these above mentioned scales there are three validity scales, Viz. LK. and F. in each part of JMPI. The split half reliability of Form A ranges from .67 to .89 while the

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same kind of reliability for Form B ranges from .64 to .83. Form A (psychosis & Psychoneurosis) were administered to the subjects of both the group individually. The scoring was done with the help of JMPI Manual.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It can be seen from table 1 that parents of intellectually disabled child scored significantly higher on all the scales except Pa and L of psychoses part of Form A, as compared to the parents of normal child. This means depression hyperactivity, less control over feelings and thoughts, dominance of suspicious were found in higher degrees among these parents as compared to their counterpart but it does not mean that the parents are in the grip of these problems. They may develop such disorders of perceived stressful situation which are not in their control.

Table-2 represented that parents of intellectually disabled child scored significantly higher on some categories of psycho-neuroses part than the parents of a normal child. It seems that parents of intellectually disabled child suffer from psychoneurotic problems, such as, conversion reaction, phobia, depression, neurasthenia. In other words these parents may experience fleeting episodes of saddened effect. Loss of energy, fear and excessive fatigue seems to be more dominant in these parents than in with normal child. On SI scale parents of intellectually disabled child scored significantly higher than the control group. This reveals that there is a significant decline in the physical activities of the parents of intellectually disabled child as compared to the control group. Social contacts for these parents lead to unnecessary physical exertion, disorientation and apathy. Present findings confirm the previous Upadhayaya and Havalappanavar (2008), Seth (1979), Gopalakrishna & Seetha (2002) and Gupta & Jain (2002)

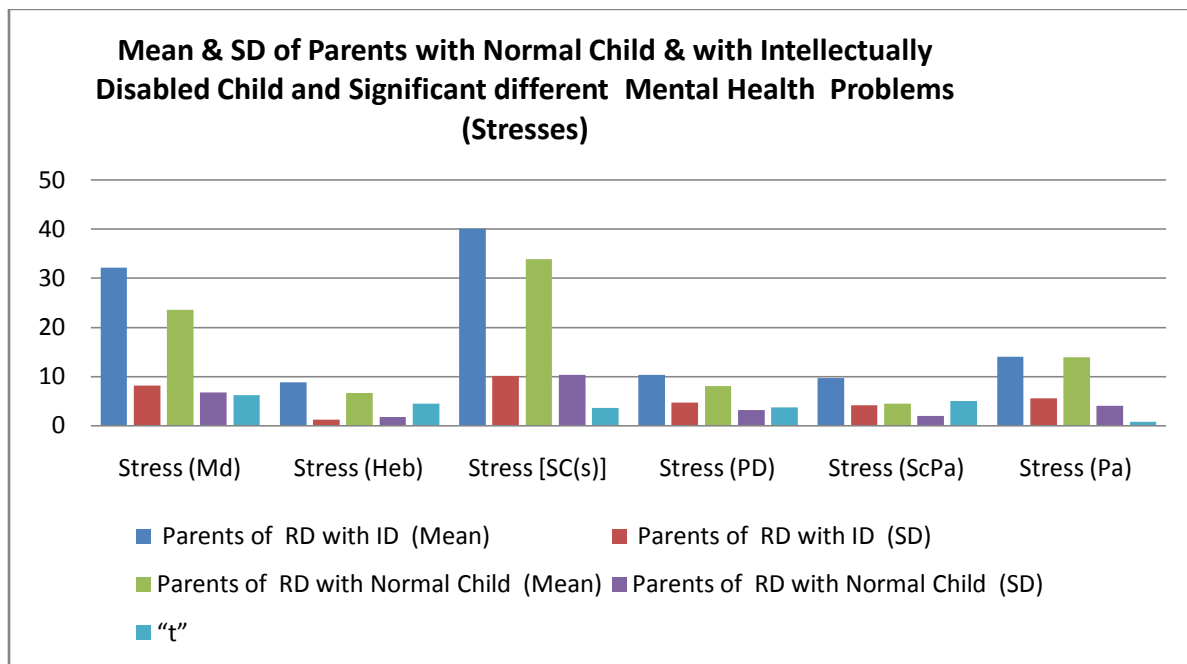
Mothers report higher levels of stress compared to fathers. Most of the parents report mild to moderate Psychoses, Psyconeuroses. None of the parents report very high level of disorder. In two areas of stress (care, emotional and social) mothers report higher psychological problem and in the area of financial stress, both fathers and mothers report equal levels of stress. For fathers, disturbed behaviour and extra inputs of care are the prominent factors, the other one being decreased leisure time. For mothers, decreased leisure time and extra inputs of care are the major factors, the other one being disturbed behaviour. Parents have reported effect on siblings as a major factor. Results indicate that more than one mentally challenged child in the family, higher levels of psychological problem in the index child, lower age of the mentally challenged child, lower age of parents and lower income of the family are associated with higher stress

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**Table –I, Significant differences between two groups on psychoses part of Form A.**

Group		Md	Heb	SC(s)	PD	ScPa	Pa
Parents of RD with ID	M	32.13	8.80	40.04	10.28	9.62	14.01
	SD	8.17	1.23	10.12	4.62	4.12	5.54
Parents of RD with Normal Child	M	23.52	6.65	33.84	7.99	4.45	13.83
	SD	6.76	1.72	10.33	3.12	1.98	4.01
“t”		6.1987*	4.4305*	3.6162*	3.6778*	5.0302*	.7209

\* Significant at .01 Level, NS – Not Significant



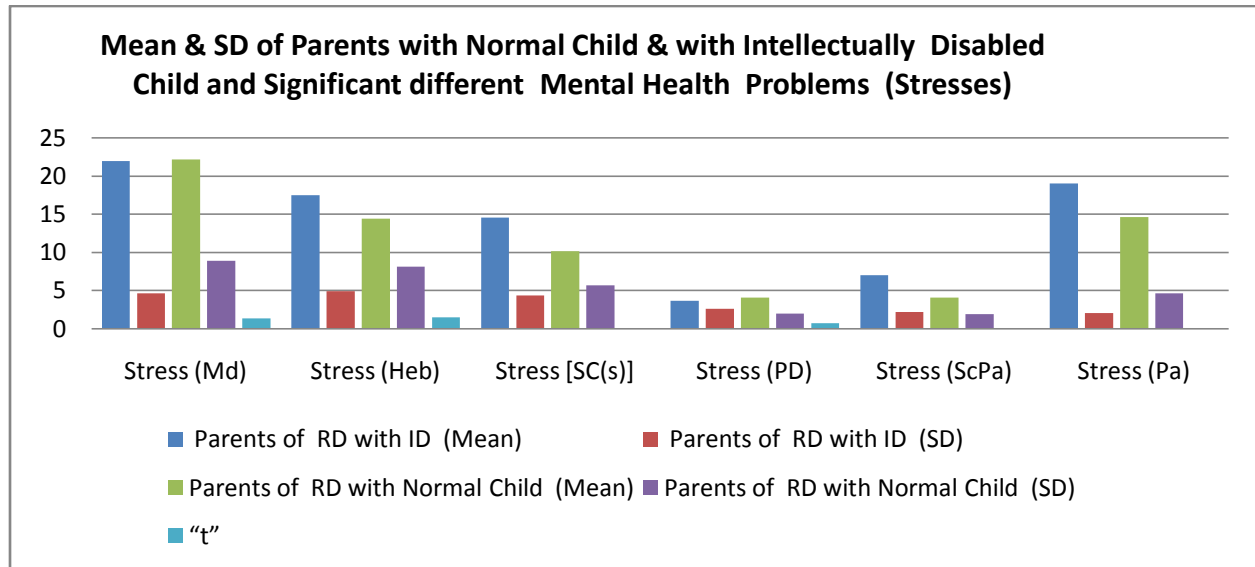
**Table –II, Significant differences between two groups on Psychoneurotic Part of Form A**

Group		AN	DC	CR	Hy (D)	Ph	D	Ne	SI
Parents of RD with ID	M	21.91	17.46	14.56	3.62	6.99	19.01	13.37	24.71
	SD	4.59	4.87	4.34	2.57	2.16	2.05	3.28	3.72
Parents of RD with Normal Child	M	22.12	14.38	10.14	4.02	4.06	14.57	8.62	20.24
	SD	8.88	8.13	5.66	1.98	1.92	4.62	2.23	7.16
“t”		1.3289	1.4948	4.0558*	.7297	2.5060**	3.6412*	8.8124*	2.3471**

\* Significant at .01 Level

\*\* Significant at .05 Level NS – Not Significant

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### CONCLUSION

Investigators have been interested in finding out the major mental health problems of parents of intellectually disabled child. The data indicated that these parents suffer with many types of problems. This all may be due to the fact the environmental niche in which the individual lives typically changes with social perception. This brings a change in the individual. At the same time physiological changes also occur which place additional stress on the personality system as it seeks to adjust itself with the environment. Sometimes these internal and external stresses overwhelm the system and dysfunction occurs.

### Acknowledgments

The author appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

### Conflict of Interests

The author declared no conflict of interests.

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