

Treatment Outcome for Low Socioeconomic Status African American Families in Parent-Child Interaction Therapy: A Pilot Study

Fernandez, Butler, and Eyberg (2009) completed a preliminary study examining the efficacy of Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) among 18 African American mothers and their children from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds using archival data. Parent report of child disruptive behavior, maternal depressive symptoms, parenting stress, and attrition were all examined in this generalizability study. Eight of the 18 families completed treatment and of these, half of the families obtained clinically significant behavior change as measured by the Eyberg Child Behavior Inventory (ECBI). No statistically significant changes were noted for maternal depressive symptoms or parenting stress.

The authors are to be commended for their consideration of cultural concerns related to the application of PCIT to African American families. As the authors point out in their discussion, given the 56% attrition rate, research aimed at identifying methods of engagement for these families while considering the impact of stressors that may be unique to socioeconomically disadvantaged African American families should be a treatment priority. This preliminary study is a promising examination of the generalizability of PCIT for African American families from low socioeconomic backgrounds. We look forward to future research in this area examining the course and efficacy of PCIT with larger sample sizes and samples which reflect the heterogeneity of African American families.