

## The Effect of Parenting Atmospheres on Children's Addiction Susceptibility

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**Abstract:** BACKGROUND: The aim of this study was to determine the effects of 16 family parenting atmospheres (16 FPA) on children's addiction susceptibility (AS). Participants were 508 Iranian adolescents attending school. METHODS: The participants were 14–19 years of age and were chosen using cluster random sampling method. Data were gathered using addiction susceptibility questionnaire-adolescent version (ASQ-AV) and parenting style questionnaire (PSQ). Data were analysed using regression. RESULTS: The results showed that parenting atmospheres 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9 and 13 have an inverse and significant effect on children's AS. Parenting atmospheres 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 15 and 16 have a direct and significant effect on children's AS and are significant predictors for children's AS. CONCLUSIONS: The present study introduce 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9 and 13 parenting atmospheres as the most efficient atmospheres in terms of reduction of children AS and 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 15 and 16 parenting atmospheres as the most inefficient atmospheres in terms of increase of children AS. Therefore efficient parenting atmospheres training to Parents should be the main goal of drug demand reduction programs. [Zeinali A. The Effect of Parenting Atmospheres on Children's Addiction Susceptibility. *Life Sci J* 2013;10(5s):122-127] (ISSN:1097-8135). <http://www.lifesciencesite.com>. 22

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### 1. Introduction

Addiction occurs only in a small fraction of individuals who try an addictive substance. In addition, there is a large variation in individual susceptibility to dependence (Agatsuma & Hiroi, 2004). Despite the commonly held belief that the majority of those who try an addictive substance become dependent, most individuals do not develop dependence. However, there is a subpopulation of users who easily become dependent on substances (Hiroi & Agatsuma, 2005). According to the Addict Prone Theory, certain individuals are at a high risk for drug dependence as a result of their unhealthy personalities if they are exposed to certain psychoactive drugs (Gendreau & Gendreau 1970). Two environmental factors significantly contribute to developing addiction prone personality (APP) characteristics: a) Low levels of parental care; and b) High scores on parental APP characteristics (Barnes, Murray, Patton, Bentler & Anderson, 2000). Studies show that opium abusers suffer from a lot of psychological problems, such as impulsivity, psychopathic or sociopathic traits, low tolerance of failure, weak ego-functions, depression etc, before they develop addiction (Lettieri, Sayers & Pearson, 2000). Franke et al. (2003) referred to the development of susceptibility through life. Flagel, Vazquez and Robinson (2003) reported that early childhood events may change the neurobiological layers and help develop a different kind of susceptibility to drug abuse in adolescents and adults. Zeinali, Vahdat and Eisavi (2008), in an ex post facto research, showed that different pathological background factors, including personality traits,

lifestyle, social and family relationships, beliefs and thoughts, feelings and emotions, and behaviors play an important role in the development of addiction. Addicts are significantly different from healthy individuals in all these pathological background factors, even before they develop addiction.

As discussed above, recent approaches and studies in different perspectives emphasize the importance of susceptibility to drug abuse. The present study considers addiction a developmental phenomenon, with its roots in the family system. Of the effective family factors involved, family parenting atmosphere has a fundamental role in addiction susceptibility.

Studies examining parenting styles have relied on Baumrind's (1971) classic distinction of types of parenting authority and Maccoby and Martin's (1983) revision of that model. In this typology, Baumrind (1991) characterized parents who operate with an authoritarian style as demonstrating high levels of demandingness coupled with low levels of responsiveness. Authoritative parents are described with both a high level of demandingness and a high level of responsiveness. Permissive parenting results from parents who demonstrate low levels of demandingness and high levels of responsiveness. Finally, neglectful parents are characterized by low levels of both demandingness and responsiveness. In summary, Pellerin (2005) describes how individual parenting styles affect children differently. Adolescents who have at least one authoritative parent show better adjustment than those who do not have this type of parent (McKinney & Renk, 2008). Authoritative parenting is associated with low levels of risky behaviors in children (Abar, Carter &

Winsler, 2009). A permissive parenting style can directly influence the control processes and indirectly influence alcohol use and abuse (Patock-Peckham & Morgan-Lopez, 2006). When parents are more permissive, their adolescents are more likely to engage in heavy binge drinking (Wood, Read, Mitchell & Brand, 2004). Authoritarian parenting was reported to be associated with greater adolescent rebellion, which in turn is related to alcohol use (Hayes, Smart, Toumbourou & Sanson, 2004). Perceptions of having an authoritarian father were reported to be positively linked to neuroticism among males. It was also reported to be related to drinking and alcohol-related problems (Patock-Peckham & Morgan-Lopez, 2009). The childhood experience of neglect and poor parent-child attachment might play a crucial role in susceptibility to addictive disorders (Gerra et al., 2009). Children and adolescents who defined their parents as neglectful had significantly higher odds of reporting substance abuse and violence-related behaviors (Jackson, Henrikson & Foshee, 1998). McKinney and Renk (2008) showed that different combinations of maternal and paternal styles (e.g. a permissive father with an authoritarian mother) are related to emotional adjustment in late adolescence, with late adolescents who have at least one authoritative parent showing better adjustment than those who do not have such a parent.

The interactions involved in father and mother parenting styles result in 16 different parenting atmospheres in the family. Based on combinations of father and mother's demandingness and responsiveness, a particular parenting atmosphere is established in the family, with unique educational output and results concerning adjustment, progress, health and even disease for children. The aim of the present study was to evaluate the effect of different parenting atmospheres on the addiction susceptibility of children.

As mentioned previously, studies have evaluated the relationship between parenting styles and children's addiction. However, the relationship between family parenting atmosphere and addiction susceptibility has not been evaluated. As pointed out, parents apply different parenting styles in the family, the interactions of which result in a unique atmosphere in the family, leading to completely different behavioral results for children. On the other hand, studies have shown that prior to addiction, susceptibility to addiction is formed, which is a predicting factor for the individual's addiction in future. As a result, the present study made an attempt to evaluate whether different family parenting atmospheres result in differences in children's addiction susceptibility.

## 2. Methods

### 2.1. Participants

A total of 508 Iranian adolescent high school boys (56.3%) and girls (43.7%), aged 14–19 years, participated in this study. Based on grade and gender, a sampling procedure was performed using a cluster random method (a total of 24 classes: 12 boys' classes and 12 girls' classes). The participants were chosen based on sample size calculations and by referring to the average number of students in each class. A total of 526 questionnaires were returned, 18 of which were incomplete and, therefore, were excluded from the study. Ultimately, 508 questionnaires were analyzed.

### 2.2. Materials

The instruments for measuring the variables included the Addiction Susceptibility Questionnaire–Adolescent Version (Vahdat & Zeinali, 2009) and the Parenting Style Questionnaire Zeinali, Sharifi, Enayaty, Asgary and Pasha (2011), which are described in the following paragraphs.

The Addiction Susceptibility Questionnaire–Adolescent Version (ASQ-AV) was developed by Vahdat and Zeinali (2009) and includes 50 items and 10 factors (internal dissatisfaction, risky behavior, non-reliability, self-exhibition, positive thoughts toward drugs, dissatisfaction with family, poor faith and spirituality, deviation from norms, egocentrism and risky relationships with friends). It is scored using a 3-point Likert-type scale (1= disagree, 2= slightly agree and 3= strongly agree). The items with factor loadings from  $\beta=0.30$  to  $\beta=0.81$  were properly loaded on 10 factors. Also, the criterion validity of the original ASQ (Zeinali & Vahdat, 2011) was determined through simultaneous implementation with the Addiction Potential Scale (APS, one of the three subscales of MMPI-2 developed by Weed, Butcher, McKenna & Ben-Porath, 1992), which was estimated to be 0.62 (Zeinali et al., 2008). The reliability of the ASQ-AV, using the Cronbach's alpha and Guttman's split-halves method, was estimated to be 0.87 and 0.82, respectively (Vahdat & Zeinali, 2009).

The Parenting Style Questionnaire (PSQ) was developed by Zeinali et al., (2011). The PSQ includes 25 items for the mother and 27 items for the father. Items rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Fit indices of the questionnaires were optimal (father: RMSEA=0.05, NFI=0.89, CFI=0.90, CMIN=399.68 and CMIN/DF=1.49; mother: RMSEA=0.06, NFI=0.90, CFI=0.93, CMIN=592.85 and CMIN/DF=1.86). Regarding the four parenting styles, the items of both questionnaires were well-loaded within a range of  $\beta=0.30$ –0.81. The internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) for the fathers' authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful

parenting styles were 0.89, 0.78, 0.73 and 0.80, and styles, respectively.  
0.84, 0.70, 0.73 and 0.77 for the mothers' parenting

Family Parenting Atmospheres			Regression Statistical Indexes			
16 Atmospheres	Mother	Father	R <sup>2</sup>	F	$\beta$	sig
1	authoritative	authoritative	.256	182.24	-.515	.001
2	authoritative	authoritarian	.026	13.39	-.161	.001
3	authoritative	permissive	.196	123.45	-.443	.001
4	authoritative	neglectful	.086	47.41	-.293	.001
5	permissive	authoritative	.153	91.26	-.291	.001
6	permissive	authoritarian	.055	29.39	.234	.001
7	permissive	permissive	.008	4.10	-.090	.057
8	permissive	neglectful	.044	23.32	.210	.001
9	authoritarian	authoritative	.073	39.74	-.270	.001
10	authoritarian	authoritarian	.071	38.67	.266	.001
11	authoritarian	permissive	.004	2.16	.065	.142
12	authoritarian	neglectful	.096	53.75	.310	.001
13	neglectful	authoritative	.067	36.48	-.259	.001
14	neglectful	authoritarian	.149	88.38	.386	.001
15	neglectful	permissive	.031	16.19	.176	.001
16	neglectful	neglectful	.171	104.32	.413	.001

### Procedure

The questionnaires were completed by the students during class time at school authorities' discretion. Students were informed about the nature of the study and assured of confidentiality and anonymity by the researcher, prior to distribution of the questionnaires. Data were analyzed using the regression statistical method.

### 3. Results

A total of 508 Iranian adolescents attending school were included in the analysis (286 males and 222 females). The participants were 14–19 years of age and were studying in human sciences, experimental sciences, mathematics and physics, work and science and technical-professional high school branches.

The means and standard deviations of the participants' addiction susceptibility scores appear in Table 1 and 16 family parenting atmospheres are listed in Table 2. Table 1 show that the mean of the participants' addiction susceptibility scores was 79.52, with no differences between boys and girls.

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations of the participants' addiction susceptibility

Gender	Mean	Standard Deviation
Boy	79.41	12.66
Girl	79.66	11.90
Total	79.52	12.32

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations of the participants' family parenting atmospheres

Family Parenting Atmospheres	Mother	Father	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	authoritative	authoritative	66.45	12.48
2	authoritative	authoritarian	48.13	8.17
3	authoritative	permissive	61.21	8.64
4	authoritative	neglectful	42.41	6.76
5	permissive	authoritative	47.12	8.57
6	permissive	authoritarian	28.80	6.07
7	permissive	permissive	41.88	7.19
8	permissive	neglectful	23.08	5.20
9	authoritarian	authoritative	51.42	12.48
10	authoritarian	authoritarian	33.10	6.38
11	authoritarian	permissive	46.18	9.92
12	authoritarian	neglectful	27.39	6.62

13	neglectful	authoritative	40.32	7.24
14	neglectful	authoritarian	21.00	5.26
15	neglectful	permissive	35.08	8.18
16	neglectful	neglectful	16.25	6.20

Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations of the participants' family parenting atmosphere scores.

In order to evaluate the effect of each family's parenting atmosphere, as a predictor, on children's addiction susceptibility, each of the 16 family parenting atmospheres was analyzed by two-variable regression test, as a predicting variable. The results of regression test are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Effect of 16 family parenting atmospheres on participants' addiction susceptibility

As Table 3 shows, 14 family parenting atmospheres have a significant relationship with addiction susceptibility and the two remaining atmospheres (7 and 11) do not have a significant relationship. Parenting atmospheres 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9 and 13 have an inverse and significant relationship with addiction susceptibility and atmospheres 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 15 and 16 have a direct and significant relationship with addiction susceptibility. Parenting atmospheres 1, 3, 5, 9, 13 and 2 have, in descending order, the highest to lowest inverse and significant effect on children's addiction susceptibility and are inverse (negative) and significant predictors of children's addiction susceptibility. Parenting atmospheres 16, 14, 12, 10, 6, 8 and 15 have, in descending order, the highest and lowest direct and significant effect on children's addiction susceptibility and are direct (positive) and significant predictors of children's addiction susceptibility. Parenting atmospheres 7 and 11 do not have a significant effect on children's AS and are not significant predictors of children's AS. In other words, families which apply parenting atmospheres 1, 3, 5, 4, 9, 13 and 2, provide a healthy atmosphere to raise their children and decrease their children's AS. In contrast, families, which apply parenting atmospheres 16, 14, 12, 10, 6, 8 and 15, provide an unhealthy atmosphere for their children and increase AS. Finally, families, which apply parenting atmospheres 7 and 11, do not have any role in decreasing or increasing their children's AS.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the present study showed that the families in which one of the parents is authoritative and the other one is authoritative, authoritarian, permissive or neglectful create a parenting atmosphere which has a significant inverse (negative) relationship with children's addiction susceptibility. These family

atmospheres can be considered an inverse (negative) predictor for children's AS, decreasing the risk of AS and increasing the odds of a healthy life by children. McKinney and Renk (2008) showed that adolescents who have at least one authoritative parent have better adjustment compared to those who do not have such parents. Pellerin (2005) reported in the same context that children and adolescents of authoritative parents do not suffer from drug abuse. Abar et al. (2009) showed that authoritative parenting is associated with low levels of risky behaviors in children. The results of the present study regarding the outcome of parenting atmospheres in families, in which one of the parents is authoritative, are consistent with the results of previous studies on the subject.

In addition, the results of the present study showed that families in which one of the parents is neglectful or authoritarian and the other is authoritarian, permissive or neglectful (authoritarian mother, permissive father) create a family atmosphere, which has a significant and direct relationship with children's AS. This atmosphere is a direct (positive) and significant predictor of children's AS and increases AS and the odds of an unhealthy life for children. Hayes et al. (2004) reported that authoritarian parenting is associated with greater adolescent rebellion, which in turn is related to alcohol use. Patock-Peckham and Morgan-Lopez (2009) showed that a perception of having an authoritarian father is positively linked to neuroticism and alcohol-related problems in children. Gerra et al. (2009) showed that a history of child neglect and inadequate parental care (negligence) might have an important role in developing AS in children. Children and adolescents, who label their parents as neglectful are reported to have a significantly higher rate of drug abuse and crime-related behaviors compared to their peers (Jackson et al., 1998). The results of the present study regarding the role of neglectful and authoritarian parenting atmospheres in children's AS are consistent with the results of previous studies in this regard.

Finally, the results of the present study showed that the families, in which the father is permissive and the mother is authoritarian or permissive, create a family atmosphere, which does not significantly influence children's AS and such an atmosphere cannot be considered a predictor for children's addiction, with no effect on increasing or decreasing AS. However, if the mother is permissive and the father is authoritarian, a family atmosphere is created, which

has a direct and significant effect on children's AS and it is considered a direct (positive) and significant predictor of children's addiction, increasing the odds of their AS and an unhealthy way of life. Patock-Peckham and Morgan-Lopez (2006) reported that permissive parents can directly influence the control processes and indirectly influence alcohol use and abuse. Wood et al. (2004) reported that when parents are more permissive, their adolescents are more likely to engage in heavy binge drinking. The results of the present study regarding the effect of family atmospheres, in which one of the parents is permissive, are to some extent inconsistent with the results of studies in this regard; however, further studies are required to shed more light on the subject.

The results of the present study showed that the presence of a permissive parent in the family creates four different family atmospheres:

1. When one of the parents (father or mother) is permissive and the other one is authoritative, the family atmosphere helps decrease children's AS.
2. When one of the parents (father or mother) is permissive and the other one is neglectful, the family atmosphere increases children's AS.
3. When both parents are permissive, the family atmosphere does not have any influence on children's AS.
4. When the father is permissive and the mother is authoritarian, the family atmosphere does not decrease or increase children's AS. However, when the mother is permissive and the father is authoritarian, the family atmosphere increases children's AS.

As it can be seen the results of the present study in case 2 and in some parts of case 4 above are consistent with those of previous studies and are in cases 1 and 3 and in some parts of case 4 inconsistent with the results of previous studies. One of reasons for discrepancies in the results might be the type of the study. In the present study the family parenting atmospheres were evaluated instead of evaluating each parent's style separately, which shows the importance of such studies. Another reason might be cultural differences. In the culture of western countries, parents' permissiveness might result in negative consequences because the atmosphere of the community is conducive to risky behaviors. However, in the Iranian culture, parents' permissiveness not only does not result in negative consequences but it may also lead to an increase in the intimacy between parents and children since in Iran the community (at least in appearance) is not conducive to risky behaviors. Permissive parenting style is characterized with low levels of demandingness and high levels of responsiveness. Permissive parents exhibit warmth and positive acceptance toward their children; therefore, they do not exert any control on their

children's behavior as a result of their undemanding behavior. It appears such a control is exerted by state authorities in Iran, which might have an influence on children's AS.

The present study yielded some new findings:

1. In the present study, 16 family parenting atmospheres, instead of 4 conventional parenting styles, were introduced and evaluated.
2. Harmony between parents in raising their children is emphasized in such studies; however, the results of the present study showed that despite harmony in upbringing in some families (family atmospheres of 10 and 16), the end result increases children's AS.
3. Conventionally, in family upbringing studies four parenting styles are evaluated; however, in the present study it was shown that evaluation of 16 parenting atmospheres yielded different and more real results.
4. In the present study, addiction susceptibility rather than addiction itself was evaluated, which has an important role in methodology regarding the sample under study and prevention.

The present study introduced parenting atmospheres 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9 and 13 as the most efficient atmospheres in terms of decreasing children's AS and parenting atmospheres 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 15 and 16 as the most inefficient atmospheres in terms of increasing children's AS. Therefore, instructing parents in efficient parenting atmospheres should be the main goal of drug demand reduction program.

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