

RIG Symposium B5: Family/Community Based Participatory Research RIG: State of the Science in Research of Families and Communities: Innovative Approaches to Study Methods and Data Analyses

Measuring Dimensions of Parenting Across Ethnic/Racial Groups: What Does Validity Really Mean?

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Aims: Measuring parenting quality is essential to developing evidence-based practice to foster children's optimal development. The purpose of this presentation is to examine construct validity of a self-report and observational measure of parenting dimensions based on results from two studies involving parents from diverse ethnic/racial groups

Methods: Study 1 employed The Parenting Behavior Questionnaire-Head Start, translated with back translation, to measure parenting style with Hispanic, African American (AA), and White preschool parents. In study 2, to measure the quality of maternal-infant interaction between depressed mothers and their infants, researchers video-recorded and coded mother-infant interactions using the Nursing Child Assessment Satellite (NCAST) Teaching Scale.

Results: In study 1, Hispanic parents scored lower on the Active-responsive dimension than AA and White parents, with no other differences found. In study 2, maternal-infant interaction differed significantly by maternal ethnicity/race. At 6-8 weeks and 9-months, Black/AA and Hispanic mothers rated significantly lower than White mothers; Asian women did not differ significantly.

Conclusions: Questions about meanings of differences arise. Do these instruments measure parenting dimensions based on Anglo-White norms or do they assess culture-neutral styles and behaviors that promote optimal child development regardless of ethnic/racial group designation? Such questions cut to the quick regarding true construct validity for use of these parenting measures across ethnic/racial groups. Implications include analysis of items and item clusters with child outcomes across groups. Moreover, results support seeking evidence of validity by comparison with other measures of parenting and confirmation with experts and parents from ethnically/racially diverse groups.