

Introduction

- The critical influences of parental discipline on adolescent socioemotional development is well established; however, limited work examined the mechanisms for such associations
- Social information processing framework**(Dykas & Cassidy, 2011; Crick & Dodge, 1994): environmental adversities may confer risk for individual adjustment by altering how they process interpersonal stimuli → threatening cues
- Empirical evidence:
 - Experiences of adversities (e.g., maltreatment, neglect, negative parenting) → biased emotion processing (e.g., greater attention for angry and fearful expressions; Pollak & Sinha, 2002; Masten et al., 2008)
 - Biased emotion processing → compromised adolescent development (e.g., greater anxiety, Gulley, Oppenheimer, & Hankin, 2014).

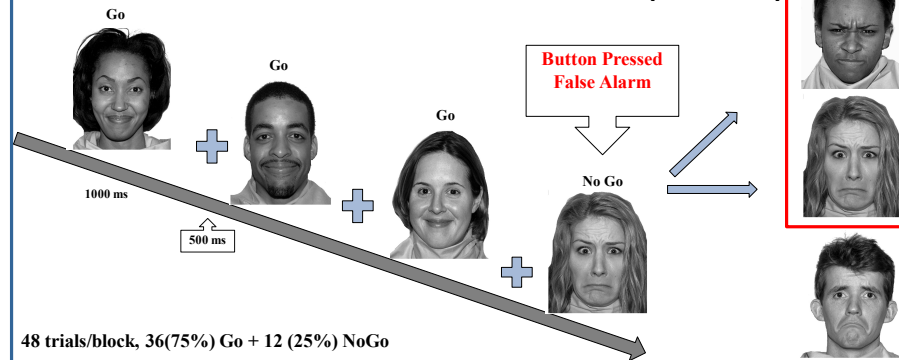
The current study

- Whether adolescent **emotion processing** biases for facial displays of threatening cues (i.e., angry, fearful emotion) may operate as indirect pathways through which **harsh and lax discipline** may be linked to **adolescent socioemotional development**

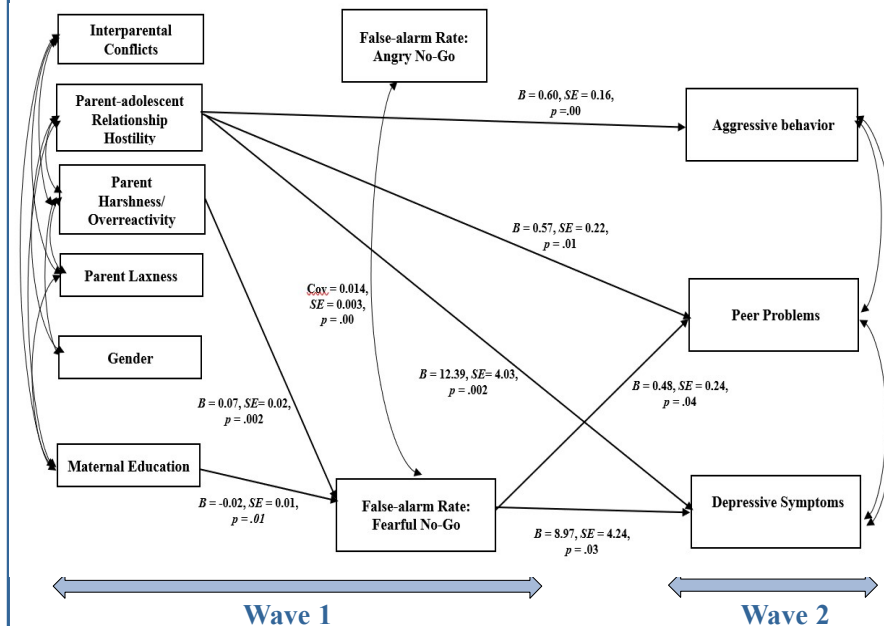
Methods

- Participants**
 - 192 families followed for two annual waves
 - Target adolescent: Mean(age)= 12.4 @ Wave 1
- Measures:**
 - Parent Harshness/Overreactivity & Laxness**(Wave 1): 21-item Parenting Scale completed by both parents
 - Adolescent functioning**(Wave 2, adolescent self report):
 - Aggressive behavior:** Youth Self Report
 - Depressive symptoms:** Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale
 - Peer problems:** Multidimensional Peer Victimization Questionnaire
- Covariates** (Wave 1)
 - Interparental conflict:** Parent-reported on Conflict and Problem-Solving scale
 - Parent-adolescent relationship hostility:** Adolescent-report on Conflict Behavior Questionnaire
 - Maternal education**

Emotional Go/NoGo Association Task(Wave 1)



Results



Results

Indirect Effects:

- Greater parent harshness/overreactivity → greater difficulty inhibiting responses to fearful distractors → more peer problems one year later
 - Estimate = 0.03, bootstrapped 95% CI: [0.001, 0.08]
- Greater harshness/overreactivity → greater difficulty inhibiting responses to fearful distractors → more depressive symptoms
 - Estimate = 0.61, bootstrapped 95% CI: [0.05, 1.40]

Discussion & Conclusion

- Adolescent **emotion processing** was involved in the indirect pathway linking **harsh/overactive discipline** and adolescent **depressive symptoms and peer problems** one year later
- Fear processing bias** in the form of greater difficulty in disengaging attention away from negative emotional stimuli
 - May reflect the adaptive capacity to be hypervigilant to negative emotional cues in order to better anticipate and protect themselves against harsh and punitive caregivers
- Null finding for anger processing**
 - Extreme adverse experiences(e.g., abuse) in clinical samples vs. harsh/overactive discipline in non-at-risk sample
 - Harsh/overreactive parenting might not impose at much adaptive pressure to prioritize and to rapidly attend to angry faces
- Environmental adversity (e.g., maltreatment, negative parenting)
 - Enhanced amygdala reactivity (Herringa et al., 2016)
 - Abnormal connectivity between amygdala & vmPFC when processing fearful stimuli (Herringa et al., 2013, 2016)

References

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