Screening for family functioning in primary care: Preliminary Evidence

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Background

• Initiation of alcohol, cigarette, marijuana, and condomless sex behaviors by the age of 13 range from 3-16% and prevalence of these behaviors in high school range from 9-30%.
• The American Academy of Pediatrics suggest screening adolescents for risk behaviors in primary care settings.
• Yet, time constraints in clinical settings may limit screening for multiple risk behaviors.
• Family functioning behaviors are shown to be associated negatively with substance use and sexual risk behaviors.
• Therefore, this study aimed to identify a subset of family functioning items that can be used to screen for substance use and sexual risk behaviors.

Data Sample/Measures

• Harmonized adolescent data from five family-based intervention trials.
  ▪ N = 1843
  ▪ 12 to 18 years (M = 13, SD = 1.2)
• Family Functioning Measures
  ▪ Parental Involvement (PI) 11 items
  ▪ Positive Parenting (PP) 6 items
  ▪ Family Communication (FC) 3 items
  ▪ Parent-adolescent Communication (PAC) 20 items
  ▪ Parental Monitoring (PM) 6 items
• Risk Outcomes Measures
  ▪ Lifetime and past 90-day substance use behaviors
  ▪ Lifetime and past 90-day sexual risk behaviors

Data Analyses

• EFA with 46 family functioning items (n = 918)
  ▪ Reduced 46 items to 21 items based on communalities (> .60)
• CFA with 21 items of family functioning (n = 916)
  ▪ Reduced 21 items to 12 items based on factor loadings (>.40)
• Bivariate correlations for convergent and divergent validity

Results/Discussion

• Results indicated the 12 family functioning items (out of 46 items) were positively correlated with the five family functioning subscales indicating convergent validity.
• Further, the 12 items were negatively correlated with all substance use outcomes, but not the sexual risk behavior outcomes, indicating divergent validity.
• Primary care providers who may feel uncomfortable or perceive a low prevalence of substance use behaviors among adolescents may benefit from a family functioning assessment that is also related to risk outcomes.

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<td>0.60*</td>
<td>0.76*</td>
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* p < .05

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