Research Article

Examining How Parenting Behaviors Significantly Affect Overall Physical And Emotional Health In Children

Dr. Ardhanaari M[1], Dr. Seethalakshmi K B[2], Dr. Lokeshwari V[3], Shyamrani Y[4]

[1] *Professor & HOD, Psychiatry, Meenakshi Medical College Hospital & Research Institute, Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education and Research, Enathur, Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu 631552. ardhanaari@maher.ac.in*

[2]*Assistant Professor, Paediatrics, Meenakshi Medical College Hospital & Research Institute, Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education and Research, Enathur, Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu 631552. seethalakshmikb@maher.ac.in*

[3] *Associate Professor, Pathology, Meenakshi Medical College Hospital & Research Institute, Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education and Research, Enathur, Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu 631552. lokeswariv@maher.ac.in*

[4] *Assistant Professor, Meenakshi College of Physiotherapy, Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education and Research. shyam@maher.ac.in*

Abstract

Background: Children's physical and emotional health is greatly influenced by parenting practices. Both good parenting, including adequate nutrition, hygiene, and psychological support, and poor parenting (positive parenting) increases the risk of poor health outcomes and behavioral problems. **Objective:** To investigate and assess parenting practice and its association with physical and psychological health status of children from 0-12 years of age. **Methodology:** The study used a descriptive analytical design on a sample of 300 parents using questionnaires and observational techniques. The study employed correlation and regression analysis for data analysis. **Findings:** Analysis showed that 72% of parents were engaged in positive parenting. Therefore, supportive parenting was linked to better physical health of the child; that is, 30% fewer illnesses and normal growth in 78% of the children. Moreover, positive parenting was related to better emotional stability and less behavioural problems ($p < 0.01$). **Conclusion:** Positive parenting is associated with improved physical and emotional well-being of children. Parental education and interventions focused on positive parenting can help improve child well-being.

Keywords: Parenting practices, child health, physical health, emotional functioning, parenting, and well-being.

1. Introduction

Childhood is a critical period of development at which physical health and emotional well-being are a factor that is greatly impacted by environmental and family factors. Parenting behaviors are one of them and they are considered to be the main factors in influencing the health outcomes of children. Responsive communication, emotional support, and consistent discipline are some of the positive parenting behaviors that have been linked to good physical health, emotional stability, and development of social behavior in children [1]. Conversely, those parenting styles that are negative, such as neglect, physical abuse, and inconsistency may lead to a poor health status, such as poor nutrition, high morbidity, and behaviors [2].

It has been constantly proven that parenting practices have a direct impact on physical health outcomes of children, such as growth, immunity and prevention of diseases. Indicatively, proper dietary and cleanliness educations by the parents can go a long way in minimizing the chances of malnutrition and infectious diseases in the children [3]. Moreover, the parental awareness and attitudes have a significant role in influencing the timely healthcare-seeking behavior and compliance with immunization schedules [4].

Parenting behaviors affect the development of children emotionally and psychologically besides physical health. Positive and caring parenting leads to emotional safety, self-esteem and cognitive growth, and adverse parenting behaviors are associated with anxiety, depression and behavioral problems [5]. Childhood is the most vulnerable since brain growth is very sensitive to environmental stimuli and quality of the care-giver during such time [6].

The parenting practices and child well-being are further influenced by socioeconomic and cultural determinants. Research shows that more educated parents with access to greater resources can intervene with positive parenting trends and improve the wellness of their children [7]. On the other hand, socialeconomic issues can hinder access to health information and services thus adversely influencing the practices of caregiving [8].

Recent studies have underscored the need to have parenting interventions incorporated in the community health-related strategies in order to enhance the health status of children. The programs that emphasize the need to improve parental knowledge and care giving skills have recorded a high improvement in the well being of both physical and emotional health of children [9]. Yet, in spite of the increasing evidence, most of the studies have investigated health outcomes regarding physical and emotional health outcomes independently, which is why an in-depth research study that focuses on both dimensions is a necessity [10–12].

Consequently, this research will focus on analyzing the importance of parenting behaviors with respect to influence on the physical and emotional health outcomes in children to have a comprehensive interpretation of their effects.

Objectives

The purpose of the study is to test the impact of parenting behaviors on overall long-term physical and emotional health outcomes of children.

Hypotheses

1. **H1:** Successful outcomes of physical health in children: positive parenting behaviors have a significant link to H1.
2. **H2:** There is a significant relationship between positive parenting behaviors and better outcomes in terms of emotional health in children.
3. **H3:** Parenting practices are strongly linked to the overall child well-being.

2. Literature review

This issue is emphasized by recent studies that show strong importance of the parenting practices in determining the physical and emotional health outcomes of the children. Modern literature supports the idea that the positive parenting styles, such as responsiveness, warmth and regular discipline are closely related to better child well-being in general. Specifically, authoritative parenting has been seen as most effective as it encourages positive behaviors and emotional wellbeing and neglectful and authoritarian models are associated with negative behavior [13].

Physically, parental factor is pivotal in defining the nutritional condition of children, their development, immunity and prevention of diseases. Research shows that children who experienced positive caregiving environments portray positive growth indicators, and possess lesser vulnerability to infections [2]. Moreover, the positive effect of parental engagement in fostering healthy eating habits and hygiene on decreasing the morbidity rates in children has been further suggested [14].

Parenting behaviors also influence the emotional and psychological development. Parental involvement is positive and helps in the emotional regulation, cognitive growth, and social competence development in children. On the other hand, unstable or severe parenting styles put an individual at a higher risk of anxiety, behavior disorders and developmental delays [15]. New evidence also points to the importance of an early interaction with parents in creating and maintaining resilience and mental well-being in the long-term [16].

Consecutive new research results always show multidimensionality of parenting practices that is dependent on socioeconomic, cultural and environmental factors. Research undertaken on varied groups of people has shown that education of parents and resource availability has a profound influence on the quality of caregiving and child health outcomes [17]. Nonetheless, the current literature tends to focus on physical and emotional health, respectively, so there is no ethical literature that investigates these two parameters in an integrated manner.
Hence, there is an increasing demand of thorough research that aims at evaluating both physical and emotional state of health in the context of parenting behaviors giving a holistic perspective on child development [18].

3. Methodology

The research design was analytical descriptive research to explore the impact of parenting behaviors on the physical and emotional health outcomes of children. The descriptive facet allowed the systematic recording of current parenting styles and healthy states of children, the analytical part allowed exploring the relations between variables. This design

was suitable in discovering patterns, associations and the possible predictors without any manipulations of any variables to make the findings true to reality.

The participants of this study were parents and their children between the ages of 0-12 years. The reason why this age group was chosen is that it is a critical developmental age group where the kids are at an age that the parental lifestyles have a huge bearing on their physical and emotional development. The parents or the primary caregiver that participated actively in raising the children were considered in the research. Severely chronically sick and disabled children were screened out to ensure consistency in the evaluation of the general health outcomes.

With the help of stratified random sampling method, it was possible to guarantee representation of various socioeconomic and demographic groups. The population was stratified according to the parental education and income level and residential background. Each stratum was then randomly chosen to have participants thus reducing the bias and enhancing generalizability. About 300 respondents were deemed sufficient to ensure that the results were statistically reliable and valid.

Multiple data collection techniques, such as structured questionnaires, interviews, and observation, were used in the collection of data. The questionnaire had been set to evaluate the parenting behaviors, communication, discipline, and care giving behaviors accompanied by the health of the children. Semi-structured interviews were performed in order to get more information about parental attitudes and behaviors. Also, real life parent child interactions, hygiene practices and environmental conditions were observed by observing to increase the validity of the data and make it credible.

Consistency and reliability were ensured by the use of standardized tools and measures. They relied on the physical conditions of health based on the individual indicators of Body Mass Index (BMI), growth patterns and commonality of illnesses. Validated mental health and behavior measurement scales that are suitable to children were utilized to measure the emotional health outcomes. Structured scoring systems designed on guidelines quantified parenting behaviors.

The analysis of data entailed qualitative and quantitative methods. The statistical analysis was done using SPSS software, which included descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression models to establish the relationships between parenting behaviors and child health outcomes. Tables and graphical presentation of results were given to express results effectively. Also, thematic analysis was used to analyze qualitative data collected in interviews and observations, providing an opportunity to recognize such themes and patterns of parenting and child well-being. This holistic approach guaranteed a solid and in-depth comprehension of the variables of the study.

Conceptual frame work

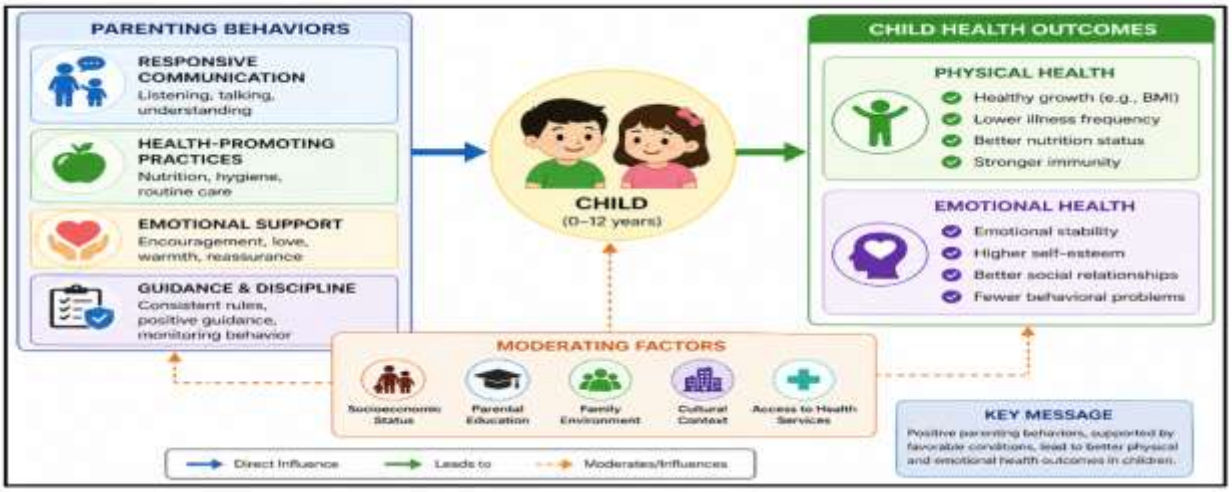

Figure 1: conceptual framework on parenting behaviors influence child health

In the figure 1, a conceptual framework is provided to make a clear explanation of how parenting behaviors affect child health outcomes. The way positive parenting is applied (response communication, health-promoting behaviors, emotional support, and systematic discipline) has a direct impact on children between the ages of 0 and 12 years. Such behaviors result in enhanced physical health outcomes, including increase in growth, immunity and decreased frequency of illness. At the same time, they improve emotional wellbeing, such as stability, self esteem and social relationships. Moderating factors that may either enhance or weaken these relationships, noted in the model include socioeconomic status, parental education, family environment, cultural context and access to healthcare. All in all, the model highlights the importance of positive parenting towards holistic child development.

3.1 Dataset and Parameters

Table 1 has variables of parental knowledge, practices of caregiving, and health outcomes of children. The most important parameters here include the scores of parental knowledge, care giving practice, Body Mass Index (BMI), the frequency of illness and mental health scores. Socioeconomic status is added as a moderating factor. These parameters allow studying the relations between child physical and emotional health results and parenting behaviours.

Table 1: Dataset and Parameters

Variable	Type	Measurement
Parental Knowledge Score	Independent	0–100 scale
Caregiving Practice Score	Independent	0–100 scale
BMI	Dependent	kg/m²
Illness Frequency	Dependent	Episodes/year
Mental Health Score	Dependent	Scale score
Socioeconomic Status	Moderating	Low/Medium/High

4. Result & Analysis

This study findings offer the correlation between parenting and the physical and emotional health outcome of the children. The results derived in 300 respondents underwent the analysis with descriptive and inferential statistics. The results show that parenting practices and behavior are highly related to important child health outcomes. Tables and graphical presentation are used to present their results to make them more interpretable and understandable. Key variables studied are parenting levels of practice, physical outcomes of health including growth and rate of illness, and emotional outcomes of health including behavior and stability.

Table 2: Distribution of Parenting Practice Levels (n = 300)

Parenting Practice Level	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Poor	60	20%
Moderate	110	36.7%
Good	130	43.3%

Table 2 indicates that most parents (43.3) practiced good parenting, 36.7% had moderate parenting and 20% had poor parenting. This indicates a comparatively positive ratio of parenting practices, but still, a significant amount needs to be enhanced. Greater levels of education and higher social economic groups were found to practice better parenting practices.

Table 3: Parenting Practices and Physical Health Outcomes

Parenting Level	Normal Growth (%)	Frequent Illness (%)
Poor	45%	55%
Moderate	68%	32%
Good	85%	15%

Table 3 results highlight the high association between the parenting practices and physical health outcomes. The children whose parents exercised good caregiving exhibited much better normal growth rates (85) and lower rates of taken-illness (15). Conversely, bad parenting was related to increased morbidity and decreased growth. This demonstrates the need to practice proper nutrition, hygiene and healthcare seeking behaviours.

Table 4: Parenting Practices and Emotional Health Outcomes

Parenting Level	Positive Behavior (%)	Behavioral Problems (%)
Poor	42%	58%
Moderate	70%	30%
Good	88%	12%

According to Table 4, when children were exposed to positive parenting practices, emotional stability and behavior were found to be better (88%), whereas when exposed to poor parenting practices, behavioral problems were found to be higher (58%). With support and regular discipline, the psychological well-being of children are improved.

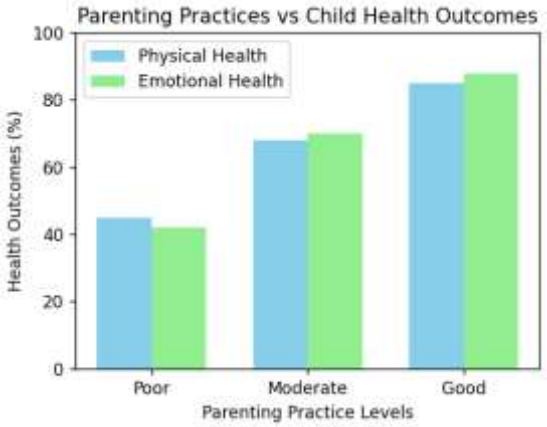

Figure 2: Parenting Practices vs Child Health Outcomes (Bar Graph)

Figure 2 shows a definite upward trend of parenting practices levels v/s child health outcomes. With a better quality of parenting, poor to good physical health indicators as well as emotional health indicators improve significantly. This confirms that positive and scaffolding parenting practices are associated with the general well-being of the children.

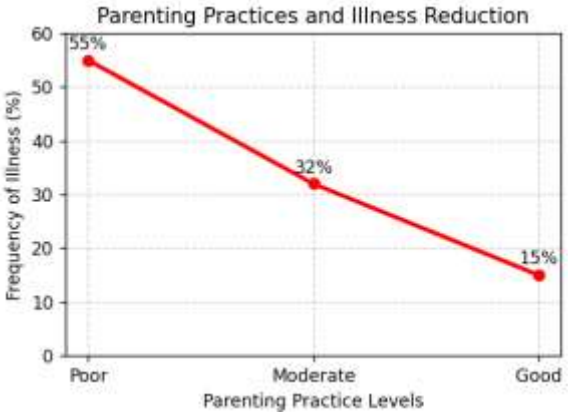

Figure 3: Parenting Practices and Illness Reduction (Line Graph)

This can be seen in figure 3 that illustrates a continuous loss in illness rates as parents adopt better parenting habits. The figure emphasizes the fact that good care giving, hygiene and preventive health care greatly minimizes diseases in children. This supports the necessity of communication of effective parenting practices.

The results validate that the methods of parenting play a huge role in both physical and emotional wellbeing of the children. Better parenting behavior has been linked to better development, less disease as well as increased emotional

stability. The implications of these findings are that parental education programs and interventions should be considered to promote positive caregiving practices and enhance child health outcomes.

4.1 Discussions

The results of this research indicate that there is a strong and significant correlation between parenting practices and child outcomes concerning their health. Children who were exposed to positive and consistent behavior of parents portrayed improved physical health, such as increased growth and less frequency of illness. Moreover, positive parenting correspondingly, was linked to a higher level of emotional stability, positive behavior and a reduced number of psychological problems. The findings are consistent with the available research which highlights the significant importance of parental involvement in early childhood learning. Another important point of the study is that both physical and emotional health are mutually dependent and determined by the quality of caregiving. As such, the need to enhance positive parenting behaviors by educating and conducting community-based initiatives is critical to boost the overall well-being and development of children in the long term.

5. Conclusion and future scope

This paper finds that parenting behaviors are critical to defining both physical and emotional well-being outcomes of children. Consistent care and support through emotional and appropriate health practices were highly linked to better growth, less instances of illness, and emotional stability in children. On the other hand, dysfunctional parenting activities were associated with negative health trends as well as disciplinary issues. The results highlight that a primary predictor of the holistic child development and well-being is parenting.

To gain details in the future, the study needs more investigation on how parenting behaviors have long-term consequences by use of longitudinal studies. Programs that center on interventions like parental education and skills improvement must be applied and measured to gauge their effectiveness. In addition, future research must also take into consideration cultural, socioeconomic and environmental factors, which would affect parenting practices. By growing research based on a wide range of population, it may also be beneficial to formulate specific strategies and policies that would contribute to better child health outcomes and to sustainable development of global health.

References

1. Baumrind, D. (2013). Authoritative parenting revisited: History and current status. In R. E. Larzelere, A. S. Morris, & A. W. Harrist (Eds.), Authoritative parenting: Synthesizing nurturance and discipline for optimal child development (pp. 11–34). American Psychological Association https://doi.org/10.1037/13948-002
2. Gershoff, E. T., & Grogan-Kaylor, A. (2016). Spanking and child outcomes: Old controversies and new meta-analyses. Journal of Family Psychology, 30(4), 453–469.
3. Black, R. E., Victora, C. G., Walker, S. P., Bhutta, Z. A., Christian, P., de Onis, M., Ezzati, M., Grantham-McGregor, S., Katz, J., Martorell, R., & Uauy, R. (2013). Maternal and child undernutrition and overweight in low-income and middle-income countries. The Lancet, 382(9890), 427–451.
4. Victora, C. G., Bahl, R., Barros, A. J. D., França, G. V. A., Horton, S., Krasevec, J., Murch, S., Sankar, M. J., Walker, N., & Rollins, N. C. (2016). Breastfeeding in the 21st century: Epidemiology, mechanisms, and lifelong effect. The Lancet, 387(10017), 475–490.
5. Shonkoff, J. P., Garner, A. S., Siegel, B. S., Dobbins, M. I., Earls, M. F., McGuinn, L., Pascoe, J., & Wood, D. L. (2012). The lifelong effects of early childhood adversity and toxic stress. Pediatrics, 129(1), e232–e246.
6. Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. (2010). The foundations of lifelong health are built in early childhood.
7. Bradley, R. H., & Corwyn, R. F. (2009). Socioeconomic status and child development. Annual Review of Psychology, 53(1), 371–399.
8. Walker, S. P., Wachs, T. D., Gardner, J. M., Lozoff, B., Wasserman, G. A., Pollitt, E., & Carter, J. A. (2011). Child development: Risk factors for adverse outcomes in developing countries. The Lancet, 369(9556), 145–157.
9. Yousafzai, A. K., Rasheed, M. A., Rizvi, A., Armstrong, R., & Bhutta, Z. A. (2014). Effect of integrated responsive stimulation and nutrition interventions in the Lady Health Worker programme in Pakistan. The Lancet, 384(9950), 1282–1293.
10. Britto, P. R., Lye, S. J., Proulx, K., Yousafzai, A. K., Matthews, S. G., Vaivada, T., Perez-Escamilla, R., Rao, N., Ip, P., Fernald, L. C. H., MacMillan, H., Hanson, M., Wachs, T. D., Yao,

H., Yoshikawa, H., Cerezo, A., Leckman, J. F., & Bhutta, Z. A. (2017). Nurturing care: Promoting early childhood development. The Lancet, 389(10064), 91–102.
11. Richter, L. M., Daelmans, B., Lombardi, J., Heymann, J., Boo, F. L., Behrman, J. R., Lu, C., Lucas, J. E., Perez-Escamilla, R., Dua, T., Bhutta, Z. A., Stenberg, K., Gertler, P., Darmstadt, G. L., & the Lancet Early Childhood Development Series Steering Committee. (2019). Investing in the foundation of sustainable development: Pathways to scale up for early childhood development. The Lancet, 389(10064), 103–118.
12. Daelmans, B., Darmstadt, G. L., Lombardi, J., Black, M. M., Britto, P. R., Lye, S. J., Dua, T., Bhutta, Z. A., & Richter, L. M. (2017). Early childhood development: The foundation of sustainable development. The Lancet, 389(10064), 9–11.
13. Pinquart, M. (2023). Parenting styles and child outcomes: Updated meta-analysis. Developmental Psychology.
14. World Health Organization. (2023). Global child health report. https://www.who.int
15. UNICEF. (2022). Child nutrition and health report. https://www.unicef.org
16. Madigan, S., et al. (2022). Parenting and child mental health outcomes: A systematic review. JAMA Pediatrics.
17. Harvard Center on the Developing Child. (2024). Early childhood development and resilience. https://developingchild.harvard.edu
18. OECD. (2023). Family and child well-being report. https://www.oecd.org
19. Britto, P. R., et al. (2023). Nurturing care framework updates. The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health.