

Comparing Acceptability of a Parent Training Program Among Rural and Urban Undergraduates

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Abstract

Approximately 3.5% of children ages three to thirteen are diagnosed with behavioral or conduct problems. Literature indicates that the prevalence of behavioral problems is increasing. Children residing in rural areas are more likely to display behavioral problems as compared to children residing in urban areas. Behavioral Parent Training (BPT) aids caregivers by altering parenting behavior toward children with challenging behaviors. Research on rates of BPT acceptability have found mixed results. Parent-Children Interaction Therapy (PCIT) is an empirically supported BPT for children ages 2-7 and their caregiver(s) that aims to reduce child externalizing behaviors. PCIT increases positive interactions, adjusts behavior management techniques, and increases the sensitivity of caregivers. Acceptability of treatment relates to clients' perception of appropriateness of the procedures, which impacts its effectiveness. PCIT acceptability among families residing in rural areas has not been extensively studied. However, caregivers who reside in rural areas may be sensitive to behavioral parenting programs due to cultural and interpersonal barriers. Moreover, examination of the PCIT acceptability rate among nonparental caregivers is lacking, as well. Nonetheless, it is found that nonparental undergraduates are open and able to learn parenting strategies reinforced in PCIT. This study compared PCIT acceptability among undergraduate psychology students identifying as having a rural or urban background. Six hundred two students completed an online assessment on child behavior and PCIT acceptability. Results indicate that there was not a significant difference in students' identified background and PCIT acceptability, $F(593) = 1.04, p = .308$.

Keywords: parent-child interaction therapy; behavioral parent training; acceptability; rural; urban; nonparents