

Parenthood in adolescence among processes of differentiation and adjustment at parental role

While literature reports significant adjustment difficulties in the parental role as well as complex development paths of adolescent mothers, only few studies analyse the influence of developmental processes on maternal parenting skills. The research is aimed to analyse how the level of differentiation of adolescent mothers could affect their parenting stress and how couple adjustment, maternal self-esteem and perceived social support act as modulating factors.

The survey group is made up of 30 Italian female teenagers, to whom the following measures were administered: The Differentiation of Self Inventory (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998), which assesses the emotional functioning and affective autonomy of interpersonal relationships; Parenting Stress Index (Abidin, 1995), which identifies parent-child relationships characterised by high levels of stress; Diadic Adjustment Scale (Spainer, 1976), which assesses the quality of the relationship of cohabiting couples. Self-esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) and Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Support (Zimet et al., 1988).

The results partially confirm the hypothesis highlighting that the identification with the “significant Other” predicts maternal stress ($p .05$) and that the high tendency to activate symbiotic processes, linked to specific developmental processes, facilitates adaptation to parenthood ($\beta = .36$, with $p = .05$). However, the low number of member forming the survey group does not allow to ascertain possible effect of intervening variables.

Referencs