

Parental rejection, addiction and current fathering: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

Very little is known about drug-abusing men's parental relationships in childhood and about the influence that these relationships could have on their drug use/abuse and on their current fathering. This study aims to examine how the maternal and/or paternal acceptance/rejection may have influenced drug-abusing men's fathering and how it could have consequences on the drug-abuse itself. Generalized linear models, hierarchical logistic regression and correlations were used to show how 41 drug-abusing fathers residing in rehab clinics differ from 41 fathers with no history of drug-abuse as regards the relationships with their parents and with their children. Men who enrolled in the study completed a socio-demographic interview and a battery of 3 self-report measures selected to document their current fathering and the relationships with their parents. When the drug-abusing fathers were compared to fathers with no history of drug- use/abuse, appeared that: (i) drug-abusing men perceive their fathers as highly rejecting; (ii) the higher is the remembrance of paternal rejection the greater is the likelihood that the adult is classified in the addicted group; (iii) drug-abusing fathers actualize less parental control; (iv) in drug-abusing men group, maternal acceptance/rejection influences their current fathering. Parental rearing practices have important consequences on addicts' drug abuse and on their current fathering.

Keywords: drug addiction; drug abusing fathers; parents; parental rejection; intergenerational transmission.

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Introduction

In the latest Italian (Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, 2014) and European (European Monitoring Centre for Drug and Drug Addiction – EMCDDA, 2014) annual report an increased consumption of drugs among males between 25 and 36 years old in all the European countries was showed.

The widespread growing tendency to drug abuse in adulthood has driven many researchers to investigate the social consequences of the adult drug addiction. These studies have mostly focused on drug addicts' children and showed that they tend to incur in many negative outcomes (Osborn & Berger, 2009) and that they are more likely to become drug users themselves (Biederman, Faraone, Monuteaux, & Feighner, 2000; Clark et al., 1997; Kelley & Fals-Stewart, 2004). The main limitation of these studies is that they focused on the consequences on children of the parental drug abuse, but they didn't clarify which behaviours of drug abusing fathers determine negative outcomes in their children.

For these reasons, many studies tried to evaluate the drug addicts' fathering. However, researchers (McMahon & Rounsaville, 2002) underline that the parenting status is documented in substance abuse researches completed with women, but it is rarely noted in descriptions of substance-abusing men. Thus, it is important to evaluate the fathering of drug abusing men because the paternal substance abuse can be a global risk factor for intergenerational transmission of substance use and because "it is not clear at present how compromise of father-child relationships in the context of chronic substance abuse contributes directly and indirectly to all type of maladjustment in children" (McMahon & Rounsaville, 2002, pp. 11-12). To overcome these limits – and since it is recognized that a negative relationship with father can explain some children outcomes in a unique and irrespective way from the mother (Ahmed, Rohner, & Carrasco, 2012; Anderson & Eisemann, 2002; Rohner, 1998; Veneziano, 2000) – more recent studies (McMahon, Winkel, & Rounsaville, 2007; McMahon, Winkel, Suchman, & Rounsaville, 2007; Söderström & Skårderud, 2013) have evaluated the aspects and the features of the drug abusing men fathering. By means of interviews and self-report measures, authors have shown that drug-abusing men present a compromise of fathering, they show less involvement in their paternal role; lower self-esteem as parents; and poorer couple relationships (McMahon, Winkel et al., 2007).

Since the compromise of fatherhood in drug addicts is recognised, McMahon, Winkel, Suchman et al. (2007) emphasize the importance of understanding how, in the context of chronic substance abuse, parental experiences could influence the current parenting. Researchers (McMahon, Winkel, Suchman et al., 2007) revealed that, although some drug users refer positive relationships with their fathers, many drug addicts describe their fathers as neglectful and abusing. Moreover, several studies (Furstenberg & Weiss, 2000; Rohner & Britner, 2002; Rohner, 1998; Rohner & Veneziano, 2001; Söderström & Skårderud, 2013; Veneziano, 2000, 2003) have found that drug abuse can be the consequence of a parental rejection experience. Thus, these studies raise the need to evaluate also the relationships between drug addicts and their parents.

Studies concerning the relationships between drug users and their parents (Baron, Abolmogds, Erfan, & Elrakhawy, 2010; DeJong, Harteveld, Van de Wielen, & Van der Staak, 1991; Emmelkamp & Heeres, 1988; Glavak, Kuteroval-Jagodic, & Sakoman, 2003; Mirlashari, Demirkol, Salsali, Rafiey, & Jahanbani, 2012; Rai, 2008) are consistent in describing the drug user's families as dysfunctional families characterized by rejecting fathers and overprotective mothers (DeJong et al., 1991), rejecting fathers and mothers (Rai, 2008) or rejecting mothers (Baron et al., 2010; Glavak et al., 2003).

These results are in accordance with the psychodynamic perspective and in particular with the Olievenstein's theory (1982, 1984) whereby the drug user has not adequately passed the "mirror stage" (Lacan, 1949) and he has experienced a "broken mirror stage" (Olievenstein, 1982, 1984) as result of which he has not completed the "separation-individuation phase" (Mahler & Gosliner, 1955) that is needed for your own subjectivity's acquisition and that could be passed due to an appropriate paternal role. Anyhow, some of the studies above are qualitative (Mirlashari et al., 2012), they have been conducted on a small sample (Mirlashari et al., 2012; Rai, 2008), or they evaluate only the relationships between the drug user and his mother (Baron et al., 2010); other studies – as Emmelkamp and Heeres' review shows (1988) – base their inferences on impressions gathered through clinical interviews rather than using standardized measurement tools.

Despite previously mentioned limitations, these studies are in line with the psychodynamic perspective that examines drug addiction particularly in its affective and relational dimension. In our study we try to connect the different studies concerning drug abusing fathers and we aim to verify how the relationships that drug user experienced with his parents can influence the current fathering and the drug abuse. Therefore, our study aims to: (i) examine, by means of standardized tools, how drug-abusing men differ from men with no history of drug use/abuse as regards relationships with their parents and current fathering; (ii) assess whether

maternal and/or paternal rejection could be a risk factor for drug addiction; (iii) assess, in the drug-abusing fathers group, the association between parental acceptance/rejection and current fathering.

In order to show how drug-abusing fathers can differ from fathers with no history of drug abuse, we administered a questionnaire to collect the basic socio-demographic information and three self-report measures validated for the Italian population to evaluate participants' remembrances of their parents' behaviours (both paternal and maternal) and the current parental behaviours.

According to the results of previous studies (Baron et al., 2010; De Jong et al., 1991; Emmelcamp & Heeres, 1988; Glavak et al., 2003; Mirlashari et al., 2012; Rai, 2008), we expect that drug-abusing father have experienced a higher parental rejection. In particular, in accordance with the psychodynamic perspective, we expect that the drug user has especially experienced paternal rejection. In fact, even though at the heart of psychodynamic thought on drug addiction there is the primary relationship with the mother, a careful literature review also encourages reflections on the paternal role in determining the drug abuse. Furthermore, in line with previous studies (McMahon. Winkel et al., 2007; McMahon. Winkel, Suchman et al., 2007; Söderström & Skårderud, 2013), we expect a compromise of fathering in the sample of drug abusing men; in particular, we expect that drug-addicted fathers are more rejecting then fathers with no history of drug use.

Methods

Participants

The sample for this study is comprised of two sub-samples: the research sample, consisting of 41 drug-abuser fathers (M age = 40.49 years; SD = 8.11; age range: 26-57 years) living in rehab clinics of two Italian regions, Campania and Lazio; and the control sample, consisting of 41 fathers with no history of drug use/abuse (Table 1). The two samples were matched by gender and age. All participants were Italian and of Italian/European ethnicity.

The two sub-samples significantly differ as regard certain considered socio-demographic variables: drug addicts have a lower education, 46.3% (n = 19) of the research sample achieved secondary school while 46.3% (n = 19) of the control sample achieved high-school diploma, $\chi^2(3, N = 82) = 34.04, p < .001$.

In addition, consistent with National and European data, within the research sample there is an increased rate of unemployment; 53.7% (n = 22) of drug-abusing fathers are unemployed, while only 4.9% (n = 2) of the control sample are unemployed, $\chi^2(2, N = 82) = 24.91, p < .001$.

As concerns the socio-demographic characteristics of subjects' parents, however, there aren't significant differences.

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of participants as a function of the Group (Addicted and Control)

Variables	Group		Control	
	Addicted			
	<i>F</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Number of sons				
1	18	43.9	14	34.1
2	13	31.7	23	56.1
3	10	24.4	4	9.8
Education				
No qualification	0	0	0	0
Primary school	6	14.6	0	0
Secondary school	19	46.3	4	9.8
High-school diploma	16	39	19	46.3
Bachelor's degree	0	0	18	43.9
Work				
Unemployed	22	53.7	2	4.9
Employed	10	24.3	27	65.9
Self-employed	9	22	12	29.3
Marital status				
Unmarried	11	26.8	1	2.4
Married	17	41.5	39	95.1

Separated	8	19.5	1	2.4
Divorced	3	7.3	0	0
Widower	2	4.9	0	0

Procedure

The research project was presented to some rehab clinics of two Italian regions, Campania and Lazio, to recruit the sample of drug-abusing fathers. The rehab clinics who agreed to participate in this study were then visited for a meeting with the manager to identify participants who fell within inclusion criteria. The control sample was recruited and matched to the addicted one as a function of gender and age. To be eligible for the study, participants had to be the biological father of at least one child. Drug-abusing fathers had to be residents in rehab clinics while men of the control sample had to confirm that they had no history of drug use/abuse.

After collecting their informed consent, all participants completed a form which collected socio-demographic data and three self-report scales. The self-report scales were administered in a randomized order and the individual testing session lasted about 40 minutes.

Measures

Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire

The Italian version (Senese et al., 2016) of the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire adult version (PARQ Adult, Rohner & Khaleque, 2005) was administered. The PARQ is a self-report questionnaire consisting of 60 items (in the standard version) that evaluate participants' remembrances of maternal (PARQ Adult- mother) and paternal (PARQ Adult-father) behaviours when they were children. The items of the PARQ provide information about four dimensions: (1) Warmth/Affection; it refers to parent-child relationships where parents are remembered to have given love or affection, (2) Hostility/Aggression; it refers to parent-child relationships where adults believe their parents were angry, bitter, or resentful of them, or intended to hurt them, physically, verbally, or both (3) Indifference/Neglect; it evaluates if parents are remembered to have been cold, distant, or unconcerned with their child; and (4) Undifferentiated rejection; it evaluates if adults believe to have been rejected, but the expression of rejection was not clearly unaffectionate, aggressive, or neglecting. Each participant indicated how well each statement described their parents' behaviour on a 4-point Likert-like scale (from 4 = "almost always true" to 1 = "almost never true"). In this study two single total score of maternal and paternal rejection respectively were calculated for each participant. The total scores showed a good reliability ($\alpha > .80$).

Parental Acceptance-Rejection/Control Questionnaire

The short Italian validated version (Comunian, 2002) of the Parental Acceptance – Rejection/Control Questionnaire (Rohner & Khaleque, 2005) was used to investigate the participants' parenting styles. This is a self-report questionnaire consisting of 29 items that provide information about the way in which the parents (fathers and/or mother) perceive their behaviour towards their children. The questionnaire is derived from the union of the PARQ scale and of the Parental Control Scale (PCS) which provide information about the parental control. Therefore, PARQ Control allows both to obtain information about the four subscales assessed by the PARQ (Warmth/Affection, Hostility/Aggression, Indifference/Neglect and Undifferentiated rejection) and allows to evaluate the control exerted by parents along a continuum from restrictiveness to permissiveness (Control scale). Participant are asked to evaluate the frequency with whom they execute the action specified by the item on a scale from 1 to 4 (1 = "never/nearly never", 2 = "once a month"; 3 = "once a week", 4 = "every day"). The reliability analysis showed that the questionnaire provides reliable scores for the Warmth/Affection ($\alpha = .840$) and Control ($\alpha = .611$) scales, while the reliability scores of the Hostility/Aggression, Indifference/Neglect and Undifferentiated rejection scales were not adequate ($\alpha < .451$).

Data analysis

To compare the remembrances of parental behaviours as a function of the Group (addicted and controls) and the Parent (mother and father), one mixed 2×2 factorial *ANOVA*, that treated the Group as a 2-level between-subject factor, the Parent as a 2-level within-subject factor and the total PARQ Adult dimension as dependent variable, was performed.

To compare the current parental stile of fathers as a function of the Group (addicted and controls), a *MANOVA* that treated the Group as a 2-level between-subject factor and the five dimensions of the PARQ Control scales (Warmth/Affection, Hostility/Aggression, Indifference/Neglect, Undifferentiated rejection, and Control) as dependent variables was performed. Where significant, as follow-up tests, five separate between-subject *ANOVAs* that treated the Group as a 2-level between-subject factor were carried out on each single scale.

In all *ANOVAs* analyses, the Bonferroni correction was used to analyze post hoc effects, and the magnitude of the significant effects was indicated by partial eta squared (η^2_p).

To investigate if adults' remembrances of both maternal and paternal rejection in childhood contribute independently (i.e., uniquely) to the risk of addiction, a 3-step hierarchical logistic regression was performed. In the first step control variables (age, number of children, education level, and work level) were introduced; in the second step the maternal acceptance and the paternal acceptance were entered; in the third step the interaction between the maternal and paternal acceptance was considered. The presence of addiction was used as dependent variable (0 = no addiction; 1 = addiction). As regards the work level and the education level, two dummy codes were created: one that indicates the presence/absence of work (Employed/Self-employed vs Unemployed) with employed as the reference group; and one that indicates the education level (Primary school/Secondary school vs High-school diploma/Bachelor's degree) with the primary school/secondary school as the reference group. Because we were interested to test the interaction between the maternal and paternal rejection, the PARQ scores were standardized (step 2) and for the last model (step 3) the interaction term was computed by multiplying the maternal and paternal standardized scores.

Finally, to investigate in the addicted sample the relation between remembrances of both maternal and paternal rejection and the current parental behaviours, the correlations between Adult PARQ scales and PARQ Control scales were computed.

Results

Parental experiences

The *ANOVA* on the Adult PARQ scores showed significant effects of the Group, $F(1, 78) = 6.56, p = .012, \eta^2_p = .078$, the Parent, $F(1, 78) = 39.14, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .334$, and the Group×Parent interaction, $F(1, 78) = 18.60, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .193$. The mean comparison revealed that addicted fathers remembered both parents as being more rejecting ($M = 101.29; SD = 4.25$) than the control group ($M = 101.29; SD = 4.25$). The post-hoc analysis for the Group×Parent interaction explained that the differences between the two groups were solely related to the remembrances of fathers' behaviour; indeed no differences were observed in the maternal behaviours between addicted and not addicted groups ($M = 97.60, SD = 4.42$, and $M = 97.77, SD = 4.44$, respectively), while fathers were remembered as more rejecting in the addicted group ($M = 135.80, SD = 5.45$) than in the control group ($M = 104.80, SD = 5.454$, see Figure 1).

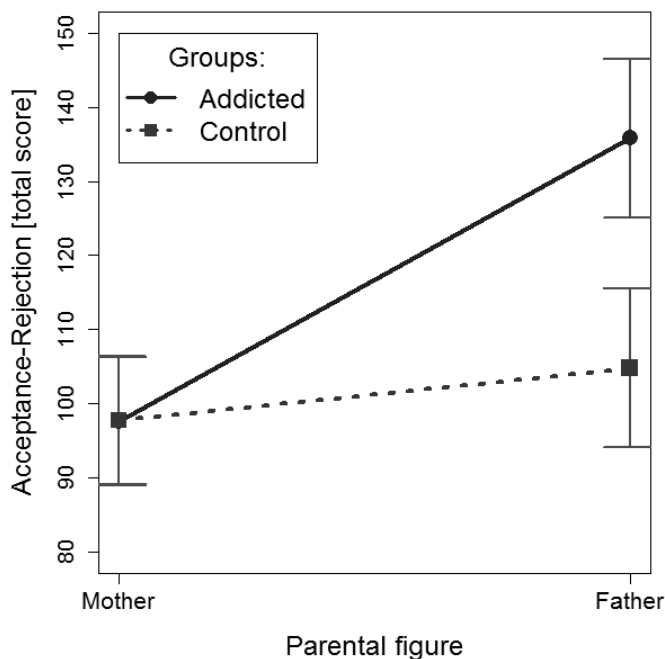


Figure 1. Mean Acceptance-Rejection as a function of the Group (Addicted and Control) and as a function of the Parent (Mothers and Fathers)

Parental practices

The *MANOVA* showed a significant overall effect of the Group on the current parenting dimensions, Wilk's lambda = .852, $F(5, 74) = 2.57$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2_p = .148$. The following univariate *ANOVAs* highlighted that this effect was observed exclusively for the control dimension, $F(1, 78) = 4.59$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2_p = .056$, while there were not significant effect on the other dimensions, $F_s < 1$. The mean comparison confirmed that fathers in the addicted group ($M = 2.79$, $SD = 0.11$) reported to use less parental control than the fathers in the control group ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 0.10$).

Relation between the parental experiences and the drug addiction

The results of the hierarchical logistic regression showed that, over and above control variables (step 1; age, children, education and work), the parental acceptance/rejection predicted the group membership, $\chi^2(2, N = 82) = 15.78$, $p < .001$, $R^2_{diff} = .104$. The model parameters analysis (see Table 2) suggested that, over and above the other variables in the model, the outcome was predictable from the education level, $b = -2.58$, odds ratio = 0.08, $p < .01$, the unemployment, $b = 3.15$, odds ratio = 23.40, $p < .01$, and, more germane here, the paternal rejection, $b = 1.67$, odds ratio = 5.28, $p < .001$. As regards this latter factor, data indicated that the higher is the remembrance of paternal rejection the greater is the likelihood that the adult is classified in the addicted group. The maternal rejection did not contribute in a specific way to the outcome prediction. Finally, the model with the maternal and paternal rejection interaction term (step 3) did not improve the fit of the model, $\chi^2(1, N = 82) = 0.06$, $p = .809$, $R^2_{diff} = 0$.

Table 2. Summary of the hierarchical logistic regression analysis of different factors on the presence of addiction

Predictor ^o	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i> (β)	<i>Exp</i> (β)	<i>R</i> ²	<i>R</i> ² _{diff}
Step 1				.402***	
Costant	2.56	1.70	0.81		

Age	0.06	0.04	1.06		
Children	-0.65	0.48	0.52		
Education	-2.62***	0.78	0.07***		
Work	2.78***	0.86	16.03***		
Step 2				.509***	.104***
Costant	1.71	2.02	5.50		
Age	0.01	0.05	1.01		
Children	-0.47	0.54	0.63		
Education	-2.58**	0.85	0.08**		
Work	3.15**	1.01	23.40**		
PARQ M	-0.53	0.40	0.59		
PARQ F	1.67***	0.50	5.28***		
Step 3				.509***	0
Costant	1.78	2.05	5.93		
Age	0.00	0.05	1.00		
Children	-0.45	0.55	0.64		
Education	-2.57**	0.85	0.08**		
Work	3.18**	1.03	23.92**		
PARQ M	-0.52	0.41	0.60		
PARQ F	1.64***	0.51	5.16***		
PARQ M×PARQ F	0.10	0.41	1.10		

Note. °Age = age of participants (years); Children = number of sons; Education = dummy code of the education level (Primary school/Secondary school vs High-school diploma/Bachelor's degree) with the primary school/secondary school as the reference group; Work: dummy code of the absence of work (Employed/Self-employed vs Unemployed) with employed as the reference group; PARQ M = z-score of the maternal rejection total score; PARQ F = z-score of the paternal rejection total score; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$; R^2 = Cox e Snell pseudo r-square.

Relation between the parental experiences and the parental practices

As regards the relation between the remembrance of maternal and paternal rejection and the current parental behaviours, the correlation analysis carried out on the addicted group showed that only the experience with the mother was related to parental practices. Data showed that the maternal rejection was significantly and positively correlated with the Indifference/Neglect dimension, $r = .448$, $p < .005$, $n = 39$, and negatively correlated with the Control dimension, $r = -.380$, $p < .05$, $n = 39$. In other words, the more the addicted participants have reported that their mothers were rejecting the more neglecting and the less controlling they report to be with their children. No significant correlations were observed between the infantile experience with the father and the parental practices.

Discussion

In this study, in order to understand how drug-abusing fathers differ from father with no history of drug use/abuse, we evaluate participants' remembrances of their parents' behaviours (both paternal and maternal) and the current parental behaviours.

As regards the current fathering – such as several studies (McMahon. Winkel et al., 2007; McMahon. Winkel, Suchman et al., 2007; Söderström & Skårderud, 2013) have shown that drug abusing men present a compromise of fathering – we found that drug-addicted fathers, compared to non-addicted fathers, practice less control on their children. The “parental control”, as measured by the PARQ Control, is defined along a continuum that moves from permissiveness to restrictiveness including both flexible (setting rules) and stricter parental rearing style (prohibitions and constraints). In the drug addicts sample we found that parental control dimension negatively correlates with maternal rejection. Therefore, the more rejecting the mother, the less controlling the father was. In general, through the correlational analysis of the parenting dimensions, we revealed that in the addict group, only the maternal rejection correlates with the current parenting dimensions. This finding suggests that mothers seem to have a greater influence on current parental practices than fathers. As regard this specific result, it must be stressed that our study had an exploratory purpose and we don't have any specific explanatory assumption about this result. We can assume that this result indicates that the parental pattern (rejection and control) is influenced especially by the relationship with the mother than with the father. Another possible explanation could be formulated by considering the specificity of the population that we studied. In fact, as according to Rohner (2015), some aspects of the adult male adjustment

are more influenced by the remembrances of maternal acceptance in childhood than paternal ones. No significant differences were observed as regards the current rejection scales. This latter not significant effect should be interpreted with caution because of the low reliability of the rejection subscales.

As regards participants' remembrances of their parents' behaviours, according to previous studies (Baron et al., 2010; DeJong et al., 1991; Emmelcamp & Heeres, 1988; Glavak et al., 2003; Mirlashari et al., 2012; Rai, 2008), our results showed that drug addicts have experienced a higher parental rejection. In particular, unlike other studies (Mirlashari, 2012; Glavak, 2003) that describe addicts' mothers as more rejecting than fathers, results showed that drug addicts perceived their fathers as more rejecting than non-addicts. An interesting finding from our study is the difference between the perception that drug users have of their mothers and their fathers; this difference isn't, however, present in the control sample. Only in the research sample, we revealed that warm and affectionate mothers oppose to extremely hostile, aggressive and neglectful fathers. Moreover, we found that the experience of paternal rejection in childhood significantly affects the probability of belonging to the drug addicts group, independently from both maternal acceptance/rejection and control factors. This result is in line with both the psychodynamic perspective and with PARTheory researches. In fact, following the psychodynamic perspective, the drug abusing man has experienced a paternal rejection that didn't allow him to complete the separation-individuation phase (Mahler & Gosliner, 1955) and so he experienced a "broken-mirror stage" (Olievenstein, 1982, 1984). During the identification process, the mirror gave a crashed self-image and the drug would work as a glue wherever the identification process failed (Recalcati, 2010). This point of view could explain, or could be a possible interpretation of why drug abusing men reported a significantly greater father rejection experience. In respect of the foregoing, as said before, also different studies in the context of the Parental Acceptance-Rejection theory (PARTheory, Rohner, 1975, 1986; Rohner & Rohner, 1980) underline how the paternal love is strictly implicated in the development of behavioral and psychological problems such as low self-esteem, deviant behavior, and hostility (Rohner, 1998; Rohner & Veneziano, 2001; Veneziano, 2000, 2003). In fact some studies (Ahmed et al., 2011; Carrasco & Rohner, 2011; Veneziano, 2003) suggested that paternal love can explain, in a unique and irrespective way from the mother, certain children outcomes. Other studies (Rohner & Veneziano, 2001) even point out that paternal love is the only predictor of specific consequences on children, as the low self-esteem (Rohner, Khaleque, & Cournoyer, 2012). Also, in the fourth meta-analytic PARTheory revision (Khaleque & Rohner, 2012) it was found that correlation between paternal acceptance and psychological adjustment is stronger than the correlation between maternal acceptance and psychological adjustment in children.

By returning to our results, a specific effect of the variables "education" and "work" on the drug addicts was also found; as a result, individuals without work and with poor education are more likely to be drug addicts. However, it is worth to notice, that it is not possible to interpret the direction of the relation between the variables.

To summarize, drug addicts perceived their fathers as more rejecting compared to their mothers and compared to parents (mother and father) of the control sample; then, we revealed that this paternal rejection might influence the drug abuse itself. We also found that drug abusing fathers, compared with non-addicted fathers, do not show particular differences regarding the current scope of fathering, except for the "parental control" dimension.

Beyond these implications we believe that it is essential to study and to investigate the fathering of drug abusing men. If it's true that drug abusing fathers can also be a risk factor for their children, the data suggest that a neglectful and absent father can be equally harmful.

Limits

Despite the useful information of this study about relationships within drug addiction, a number of limits can be pointed out. First, the small sample size, mainly due to the difficulty in obtaining the participation of men residing in rehab communities. Moreover, because of the residence in rehab communities, the subjects do not accurately represent the local population of drug abusing fathers. Similarly, they do not even accurately represent drug abusing men living in other cultures.

Finally, there is the limit of the measures we used. Self-report questionnaires affect the truthfulness of findings, especially about the current fathering. It would be interesting to assess the current fathering also from children's and/or partner's point of view.

Clinical intervention for drug addicts fathers

Despite these limitations, this study has shown the importance of childhood parental experiences in drug addiction and it has also emphasized the value of the paternal function. This feature is essential for the child development and adaptation; therefore, it is essential to know and to promote the fathering of drug abusing men. For this reason, we believe that this study will be useful to rehab communities in order to implement therapeutic programs intended to encourage the paternal function of drug addicts rather than reinforce the stereotype of fathers' absence through sporadic meetings with their children. Moreover, this study could be effective both in emphasizing the importance of a drug user assessment that takes account of the specific parental experiences, and in confirming the efficacy of rehabilitation programs which focus on the rejection internal experience's elaboration.

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