

Children Affected By Parents' Behavior



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A new study examines the role that specific parenting practices may play in children's adjustment after trauma. The study suggests that the quality of parenting practices following trauma can mediate the relationship between trauma exposure and child adjustment.

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Effective parenting practices provide a protective environment surrounding children and the authors have proposed a framework that draws on positive parenting practices that promote healthy child development, reported ScienceDaily.

The goals of parenting following trauma would be to provide structure, security, emotional warmth, and an environment that addresses the traumatic event. Skill encouragement, monitoring, interpersonal problem-solving, and positive involvement would support these goals and enable

parents to provide an environment to promote their children's resilience after trauma.

Led by Abigail Gewirtz, PhD, of the University of Minnesota, researchers reviewed the existing literature on trauma and subsequently propose a prevention research framework to inspect the ways in which parents can affect children's recovery in the aftermath of trauma.

Strengthening parenting and a focus on interpersonal relationships would serve as an effective population-based approach to promoting children's recovery and functioning following trauma. "By providing an overview of the evidence to-date, and a proposed prevention research framework, it is our hope that others will see and respond to the need to advance this field," the authors conclude.

This study is published in the April 2008 issue of the Journal of Marital and Family Therapy.

Asia Food Crisis Adds to Women's Burden

As if the burdens they shoulder are not enough, Asia's women are being compelled to bear the additional weight of rising food prices, say women's rights activists from across the region.

"With increasing prices of rice, oil, fuel transport, and all basic commodities, women workers in Asia are the worst hit," declared the Committee for Asian Women (CAW), a regional non-governmental organization (NGO), at the launch of a campaign last week to seek higher wages for female workers, IPS reported.

"Workers who produce society's food, shelter, and clothing are, themselves, in a perennially vulnerable hand-to-mouth existence," added CAW in its statement to push for better incomes for women in the formal and informal sector. This "Wage Campaign 2008" is being backed by women's organizations in 14 Asian countries, among which are Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.

"Women are definitely the worst affected when food prices go up. They will have to bear additional burdens for their families," Lucia Jayaseelan, CAW's executive coordinator, told IPS following the campaign's launch. "They also end up making huge sacrifices, such as being the last to eat in a family that is suddenly faced with limited food at home."

In addition, women are driven to seek additional jobs in the informal sector, often compelling them to work for longer hours, she added. "They take on more work, like tailoring or packing things into small packages in their homes. Some women end up having to do three jobs."

Compounding the problem is the lack of a basic minimum wage for

such female workers, Jayaseelan said. "In many Asian countries there is no minimum wage. And where they do exist, they do not take into account the rise in inflation."

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), women make up 38.7 percent, or some 730 million, of the Asia-Pacific region's total workforce, currently estimated at 1.9 billion people. But close to 65 percent of female workers earn a living in the "vulnerable" and "informal" sector, where there are no steady wages or social benefits.

Typical among those in the vulnerable and the informal sector are women who are self-employed, working in homes to produce goods for sale, or the millions who work as food vendors in the streets of Asia's major and minor cities and towns. South Asian women account for the largest share of these vulnerable women across the continent, some 82 percent, ILO's research reveals.

Asia is also home to a large body of the working poor, some 900 million people, who live on less than \$2 a day. This food crisis will hit many of them, living in poor households in urban areas. "The average poor family in Asia spends a minimum of 50 percent of the household budget on food," the report said.

The Geneva-based labor organization is calling for governments to respond to the galloping rise in prices of staples such as rice through both short-term and long-term measures. "In the short term, governments must provide cash transfers to poor households or subsidize the price of food for them," says Kapsos, a labor economist at the ILO. "In the long term, governments must invest more in rural areas, including in labor productivity for agriculture," he added.

News in Brief



Fear of Falls Drains Physical Function

Older adults who limit their activities out of fear of falling may see their physical function deteriorate more rapidly, a new study suggests.

Researchers found that among 673 Italian adults age 65 or older, those who limited their daily activities over fear of falling were more likely to experience worsening disability over the next three years, reported Reuters.

The findings, reported in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society, suggest that self-imposed limits on daily activities may make some older people vulnerable to a more rapid physical decline.



UN Disability Pact Comes Into Force

A UN convention aimed at ensuring equal rights for the world's 650 million disabled people in work, education and social life went into force on Saturday.

The pact, the first of its kind and billed by the United Nations as the first new human rights treaty of the 21st Century, took effect 30 days after being ratified by 20 countries that have signed it. That figure has since risen to 25, but does not include the United States and Russia, Reuters said.

In a statement last month, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called the implementation of the pact less than two years after its adoption by the General Assembly—a short time by UN standards—a "historic moment."

Ban said it showed the world was committed to combating "the egregious neglect and dehumanizing practices that violate the human rights of persons with disabilities."



Angry Italians Burn Rubbish

Firefighters were called out Saturday to extinguish rubbish set alight by exasperated Italian citizens as warm weather and offensive smells fuelled a long-running garbage dispute, a report said.

Firefighters put out some 30 blazes on the streets of the southern Italian city of Naples to prevent the risk of toxic gas spreading, ANSA news agency reported.

At least 1,300 tons of rubbish remained on the streets despite efforts to clear a garbage mountain which reached some 4,500 tons at the beginning of March.

The simmering crisis comes amid European Union moves to seek a court order for Italy to take action or face fines, with a decision due after a meeting on Tuesday May 6.

Many of the landfills in the Campania area around Naples are controlled by the local mafia, known as the Camorra, who make a lucrative business out of subverting waste-handling procedures and shipping in industrial waste from the north.

The European Commission in Brussels was poised to sue Italy before an EU court for failing to resolve the crisis, an EU source said last month.

Measures proposed by the government to tackle the situation were considered insufficient, according to the source.



Austrian Woman Conquers 11 Summits Over 8,000m

Gerlinde Kaltenbrunner of Austria has become the first woman to conquer 11 peaks over 8,000 meters (26,246 feet) without breathing apparatus.

She accomplished the feat on Thursday when she scaled Dhaulagiri (8,167 meters), the world's seventh highest mountain, in Nepal.

"Despite winds at 60 kilometers (37 miles) per hour, everything went well," she told the OONachrichten newspaper by telephone.

Kaltenbrunner, who was accompanied this time by fellow Austrian David Goettler, had to abandon an attempt to conquer Dhaulagiri in May last year because of a deadly avalanche.

This latest conquest puts the climber from Spital am Pyhrn, in the Austrian Alps, ahead of her rivals Nives Meroi of Italy and Edurna Pasaban of Spain, in the race to conquer the world's 14 highest mountains.

Nives Meroi became the first woman to notch up 10 peaks over 8,000 meters in May last year when she conquered Everest.

Kaltenbrunner, who began her series in 1994 with Broad Peak (8,041 meters), achieved her 10th three months after the Italian.

She has indicated that she hopes to be able to attempt in coming months the ascension of Lhotse (8,516 meters) and K2 (8,611 meters) in the Himalayas, two of the three remaining summits she has yet to conquer. If she succeeds, the only one left will be Everest.