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## Parent and Family Factors Associated with **Child Adjustment to Pediatric Cancer**

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### **Abstract**

**Objective** To identify factors that influence the association between parent and child distress among families of children with cancer and comparison peers. Methods Parent and child distress, social support, and family environment were assessed among families of 95 children with cancer (94 mothers, 67 fathers) and 98 comparison peers (97 mothers, 77 fathers). Results Significant associations were found between parent and child distress. For models examining the impact of fathers' distress on children, several moderators were identified (i.e., family environment, child age and gender, a cancer diagnosis, and treatment severity). Family environment also partially mediated father and child

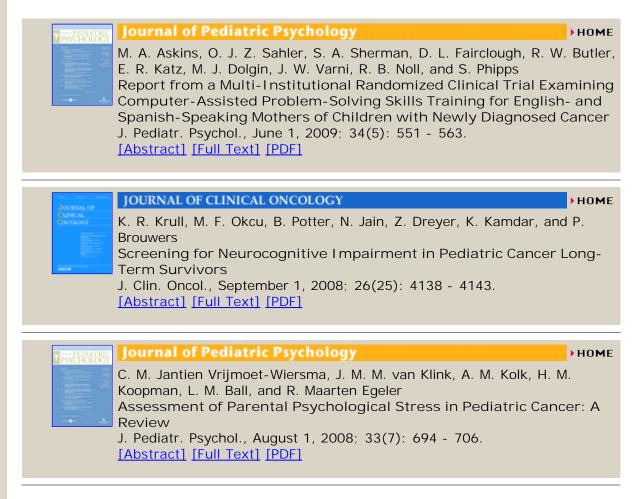
distress. **Conclusions** Children whose parents were distressed were more likely to be distressed themselves. Subgroups of children were particularly vulnerable, indicating a need to identify further mechanisms of risk and resilience and to develop family-based interventions. Support was found for including fathers as independent sources of information in pediatric psychology research and clinical practice.

**Key words:** adjustment; cancer; families; family environment; social support.

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