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Family Emotional Climate, Depression, Emotional Triggering of Asthma, and Disease Severity in Pediatric Asthma: Examination of Pathways of Effect

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▶ Abstract

Objectives (a) To assess emotional triggering of pediatric asthma and ascertain its contribution to disease morbidity and functional status; (b) to test whether negative family emotional climate (NFEQ) is associated with depressive and/or anxious symptoms and emotional triggering of asthma attacks in the child. **Method** Children with asthma ($N = 272$, 56% male, age 7–17) and their primary caregivers answered together an Asthma Trigger Inventory (Ritz, Steptoe, Bobb, Harris, & Edwards, 2006). Children reported on anxious (STAIC) and depressive (CDI) symptoms and on asthma-related quality of life (PAQLQ). Parent(s) reported on their child's internalizing (CBCL-I) and depressive symptoms


(CDI-P). A clinician also rated the child's depression using the structured CDRS-R. Asthma diagnosis was confirmed and disease severity rated according to NHLBI guidelines by an asthma clinician. **Results** Path analyses indicated that NFEQ was associated with depressive symptoms, which in turn were associated both directly and indirectly (by way of emotional triggering) with disease severity. Comparison of nested models indicated the possibility of differential roles and pathways for anxious versus depressive symptoms. **Conclusion** Findings elucidate possible pathways of effect by which family emotional climate and child depressive symptoms may influence pediatric asthma disease severity by way of potentiating emotional triggering of asthma.

Key words: anxiety; depression; family; pediatric asthma; stress.

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