

PARENTAL STRESS IN ADOPTIVE MOTHERS
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SUMMARY

The present dissertation analyses the parental stress among adoptive mothers and compares it to the parental stress of non-adoptive mothers.

The analysis is based on Abidin's model of the determinants of dysfunctional behaviour, which identifies the risk factors in the adoptive mother/adoptee interaction (Abidin, 1984). The dissertation provides detailed information about the risk characteristics in the adoptee's behaviour and at the same time, the risk characteristics in the parent's behaviour, which both lead to increased levels of parental stress among adoptive mothers.

For the purpose of the empirical study is used the Parental Stress Index (Abidin, 1984), which was translated and adapted for Bulgarians. The Stress Index is based on Abidin's theoretical model for the determinants of dysfunctional parenting. It consists of three scales: Child Domain with six subscales (hyperactivity, moodiness, adaptability, demandingness, acceptability, reinforces parent), Parent Domain (competence, attachment, depression, isolation, spouse, role restriction, health) and Life Stress Domain.

The results of the study show that the parental stress of the adoptive mothers is higher than the parental stress of the non-adoptive mothers. It also identifies which of the studied characteristics both in the adoptee and its mother lead to increased level of parental stress and gives a detailed explanation for the possible reasons for these outcomes.

The present dissertation is the first scientific research in the Psychology of Adoption in Bulgaria – a new beginning for further research in the field.