Background

- Intolerance of Uncertainty is a phenomenon underlying anxiety that reflects discomfort with ambiguity, and avoidance of situations with uncertain outcomes.
- Research suggests that parents who have high levels of Intolerance of Uncertainty may exhibit excessive control of their children (Moore, Whaley & Sigman, 2004).
- Parents who exhibit overcontrol may reduce their child’s exposure to situations, thus enhancing their anxiety due to the child’s inability to gain the tools to cope with anxiety-provoking situations.

Hypothesis:

Higher parent Intolerance of Uncertainty scores → Higher word count ratio → Higher adolescent Penn State Worry Questionnaire scores

Methodology

- Sample: N = 78
- Mean age in years (SD): 15.50 (1.70)
- Gender: Female 47, Male 31
- Race: Black 9, American Indian or Alaska Native 2, Asian 7, White 72
- Ethnicity: Hispanic 12, Non-Hispanic 66
- Mean PSWQ Score Adolescent (SD): 21.00 (9.75)
- Mean PSWQ Score Parent (SD): 44.21 (14.99)
- Mean IUS Score Adolescent (SD): 29.87 (10.59)
- Mean IUS Score Parent (SD): 27.94 (8.83)

- Parent and adolescent dyads engaged in 5-minute long unstructured conversations while being video recorded
- Videos were transcribed and word count was established for each speaker
- Word count ratio was calculated by dividing parent word count by adolescent word count

Clinical Assessment:
- Penn State Worry Questionnaire (PSWQ) adult and child versions
- Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale (IUS) adult and child versions

Discussion

- Although word count was not found to play a definitive factor in either parent IUS scores or adolescent PSWQ scores, there is still more research to be done on how other mechanisms between parent-child interactions play a role in adolescent anxiety.
- Future research will be looking at how granting of autonomy, criticism, and worry/anxiety of the parent affect adolescent anxiety.
- All three characteristics will be measured using a coding scheme.
- This pertains to previous literature that suggests that parent anxiety can enhance child anxiety, in addition to child anxiety enhancing parent anxiety.

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