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Child Maltreatment, Relationship with Father, Peer Substance Use, and Adolescent Marijuana Use

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Abstract

This longitudinal prospective study examined the relationship between child maltreatment as per reports to child protective services (CPS) and adolescent self-reported marijuana use, and the association between relationships with mothers and fathers and use of marijuana. The association between relationships with parents early in childhood (ages 6-8 years) and during adolescence with adolescent marijuana use were also probed. Another aim examined whether relationships with parents moderated the link between child maltreatment and youth marijuana use. The sample included 702 high risk adolescents from the Longitudinal Studies of Child Abuse and Neglect (LONGSCAN), a consortium of 5 studies related to maltreatment. Children were recruited at age 4 or 6 years together with their primary caregiver. Some were recruited due to their risk for child maltreatment, others were already involved with CPS, and children in one site had been placed in foster care. Logistic regression analysis was performed using youth self-report of marijuana use as the criterion variable and child maltreatment and the relationships with parents as predictor variables, controlling for youths' perceptions of peer substance use and parental monitoring, parental substance use, race/ethnicity, sex and study site. Approximately half the youth had used marijuana. Most of them described quite positive relationships with their mothers and fathers. Participant marijuana Use was associated with a poorer quality of relationship with mother during adolescence, and with peer and parental substance use. A better relationship with father, but not mother, during adolescence attenuated the connection between Child Maltreatment and youth Marijuana Use.

Keywords: Maltreatment; adolescents; fathers; marijuana use; parent-child relationships; peer substance use.