
The Impact Of Spanking On Children

The media article I chose to review was focused on the negative effects of spanking on children and youth. In the two articles that I analyzed, they authors provided evidence suggesting that spanking is an important aspect to the study of children and youth because the repercussions can be harmful to their well-being and behaviour. Any kind of unsettling event in a child's life, whether it be big or small, can impact them far beyond childhood. Spanking is widely frowned upon and in the articles discussed below, the authors provide proof as to how it can cause detrimental effects.

In the article, *This Is How Spanking Impacts a Child's Brain and Behaviour*, Risky discusses the long-lasting effects that spanking can leave on children and youth. Risky talked about how spanking can lead to a reduced level of gray matter in the brain, which is essential for the development of proper brain functions. The article referred to the 2016 *Journal of Family Psychology's* study entitled *Spanking and Child Outcomes: Old Controversies and New Meta-Analyses* (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016). This study looked at the impact of parental spanking and deconstructed different meta-analyses, each of which confirmed that physical punishment can lead to undesirable outcomes in children and youth.

The researchers who conducted this study wanted to re-evaluate the effects of spanking. In previous studies, a total of four meta-analyses concluded that spanking children could lead to a plethora of different problems in children. To see if the results differed or stayed the same, the researchers looked at over 1500 studies related to spanking outcomes. In order to meet the criteria of only looking at studies that did not involve the use of objects when spanking a child, the studies were narrowed down to just 74. Each of the new meta-analyses examined the correlation between the types of spanking parents used and the outcome of the child. All meta-analyses pointed to physical punishments causing negative outcomes, such as disobedience, generalized behavioural problems, and cognitive issues (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016).

Furthermore, the most important finding in this study was that spanking does lead to detrimental effects in children that can range from mild to severe. The researchers were able to confirm and report that this form of punishment can cause negative outcomes and aggressive or problematic behaviours in both children and youth.

Evaluation

The media article did an adequate job of providing a recount of the research article's methods

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and results. Risky (2017) makes an effort to cite Gershoff and Grogan-Kaylor's work while also mentioning the findings of their study throughout the article. Risky paraphrases some of the research article's details and often mentions the numerous different outcomes of spanking throughout her media article (Risky, 2017).

However, the media article is heavily focused on the brain's grey matter. Risky's article also refers to gray matter and the impact spanking has on it, whereas the research article does not descriptively touch on it. In the media article, Risky mentions that children and youth exposed to spanking had reduced gray matter in their brains. These children were shown to experience more of a struggle with their vital functions and were more likely to externalize their behaviours. While all of this information is useful in better understanding the effects of spanking, it was not essential to the media article because Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor (2016) did not go into any further depth discussing it.

The research article also put a heavy emphasis on the negative outcomes of spanking. While Risky did an adequate job in deepening the explanation of the effects of spanking on children, she also mentioned other facts that were not covered in the research article. The research study stated that the three outcomes that were most prominent in children who were spanked by their parents included anti-social behaviours, mental health issues, and lack in support from a trusted adult. The media article discussed the effects of spanking, but focused more on the impact it has on a parent-child relationship (Risky, 2017). Risky narrowed down her article and had a focal point of how spanking can leave children feeling confused about their parent's actions. While this is an important feature to consider when looking at the effects of spanking, it was also not mentioned in the research article and was unclear as to where this information surfaced from.

Overall, Risky did a satisfactory job representing the study, but could have focused more on the research paper results rather than other facts that were not included in the study.

Internal and External Validity

In regards to internal validity, this study would be deemed structurally sound. The amount of studies that were used in the meta-analyses was a small number of 74 in comparison to the starting number of over 1500. Had the researchers reviewed all of the studies, the results may have been swayed by the fact that the studies removed from the meta-analyses involved parents who spanked their children with objects such as spoons or shoe. The researchers did mention that they considered comparing the results of children's behaviour to those that had not been spanked, but decided against it because considering other studies would have lead to the potential for alternate results and would be a threat to internal validity.

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The study also discussed external validity directly. The research article mentioned that many studies on spanking lack the effort to look at prevention and interventions for spanking. This can be an issue for external validity because looking at preventative measures requires talking to parents who do not believe in spanking. However, these parents will have fundamentally different beliefs than parents who do spank, which can lead to unbalanced results due to an uneven grouping of the two beliefs (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016). Moreover, only looking at parents who spank their children can be considered a threat to external validity. As mentioned above, although considered, it would have been difficult to find a more diverse grouping of participants. Because this was hard to achieve, this factor may have potentially limited the generalizations that could have been formulated for this study.

Conclusion

As previously stated, the media article discussed the long-lasting effects that spanking can leave have on children and youth. It included a satisfactory amount of information from the research article about the detrimental effects of spanking a child, but also included information that did not pertain to the study's findings. The study focused on a specific group of parents rather than considering different beliefs, which impacted both internal and external validity. Both articles discussed information that proved that spanking does more harm than good, and while the research was internally valid, there were some problems involving external behaviour. Overall, each of the articles covered important facts that proved to be useful in better understanding the true impact of spanking on children and youth.

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